

Sins Of Our Fathers

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/3240983) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/3240983>.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category:	Multi
Fandom:	Thor (Movies) , The Avengers (Marvel Movies)
Relationship:	Loki/Thor
Character:	Loki (Marvel) , Thor (Marvel) , Clint Barton , Natasha Romanova , Steve Rogers , Tony Stark , Bruce Banner
Additional Tags:	Thorki - Freeform , Jötunn Loki , Intersex Loki , Famine - Freeform , Racism , Mention of Cannibalism , Starvation , Assassination of King Laufey , Thor is a racist dick at first , Hot smut comes later
Stats:	Published: 2015-01-27 Completed: 2015-03-10 Chapters: 22/22 Words: 35433

Sins Of Our Fathers

by [dorkylokifan](#)

Summary

Thor, Avengers AU. Without the Casket of Ancient Winters the people of Jotunnheim slowly starve to death. After the death of his father Loki flees his home in a last ditch attempt at survival. He could have landed anywhere, but the fates brought him to the doorstep of the Avengers and at the feet of the Thunder God responsible for so much of his people's misery.

The whole Jane thing didn't happen, nor did the coronation. Thor was never cast out for being unworthy and never learned that lesson.

A Leap Into Darkness

Once upon a time there was a happy peaceful kingdom of snow and ice. Its people were large and strong, its landscape healthy. Though barren in appearance Jotunnheim was a land of hidden bounty for those bred to survive in this place. It was a fruitful land. The people in it were happy and their King, Laufey was beloved for his practical stewardship. Laufey wanted to expand the wealth of his people and so looked to the land of Midgard for colonization. The only thing in the way was a race of mortals inhabiting the rich land there. They needed to be removed, exterminated so that his people could take up residence. He knew he would be heralded by his people for doing such a thing and the history scrolls would favor him for all the good he did for his people. He was wrong.

Asgard took issue with Laufey's claim on Midgard and defended the mortals there. Odin insisted the mortals had the right to exist and so protected the little fledgling realm from destruction. Jotunnheim and Asgard waged war and in the end Laufey was defeated and the Casket of Ancient Winters taken. The life force, the very soul of Jotunnheim was removed from the land, to lay dormant in a dark room collecting dust. Jotunnheim is no longer fruitful.

XxXxXxXxXx

Loki's gut flips as the sight, the sound, the smell of his father's crushed head fills his senses. Laufey is dead, murdered right in front of him by none other than his own brother Helblindi. This is it. This is the end. The famine has reached the royal family and the rations are almost depleted. The race known as Frost Giants is doomed to a slow death by starvation. The Allfather cares not. He turns his one good eye away from their plight. Have the Jotunn people not suffered enough for their mistake? No. Odin would see them suffer the very fate that they tried to inflict upon the mortals all those centuries ago. It is poetic justice, Loki supposes, but at the moment he needs to think about more important things, like running for his life.

In the commotion of the assassination Loki slips away unnoticed. It is one of the few benefits of his short stature. He runs to his room to commit a desperate act. For months Loki has planned for this contingency. It is a long range teleportation spell, powerful enough to reach Midgard, he hopes. He has refrained from using it until now because he just does not know if it will work or where on Midgard he will land. He could land in the middle of a vast ocean or hot dessert. He could land in the middle of a crowd of mortals that may kill him on sight. It is a dangerous gamble and the odds are more likely than not that he will die trying to escape to safety. Loki grabs his large satchel filled with the last of his food rations, a spell book, and gold. He calls upon all the threads of magic he can tap and gathers the energy to him.

The door to his room bangs loudly as someone tries to break into his room to kill him. Loki has only managed to survive this long because of his magic but his enemies are being bold today, now that his father is dead. A ball of green magic energy envelopes Loki just as the door bursts open and Loki disappears in a burst of emerald light. Helblindi sneers at the vacant spot Loki was just standing in, cursing the little runt to die.

XxXxXxXxXx

Thor swings Mjolnir and hits the Chitauri wreckage as hard as he can. He is trying to help break it up without it further damaging the building or falling and harming people below. It is tedious and stressful work. The invasion happened three months ago and though Thor and his new mortal companions were able to defeat the Mad Titan, the carnage left behind still remains. Many mortals died that day. Odin has ordered Thor to remain on Midgard for the foreseeable future in

case another attack occurs.

Iron Man hovers just below and catches the separated piece when it breaks away, carrying it to safety. He and Thor are the only ones that can do this particular clean up assignment. They are the only two that can fly. Thor grabs the other piece of the wreckage and carts it off as well, saving yet another building from condemnation.

“That’s enough for today. Let’s pack it in.” Tony says.

“Agreed.” Thor replies. The two men fly back to Stark Tower for much needed rest and refreshment. The repair and renovation of Stark Tower was completed just two short days ago and Thor is grateful for the large lavish new quarters Tony has afforded him. Before he was taking turns sharing an army cot with Steve, which Thor found to be much too narrow for his broad shoulders.

Thor sits down on his large new comfortable bed. It has a large heavy bed frame forged from solid English oak. It does not squeak or wiggle with his movements. It is sturdy. Thor changes out of his armor into some of his new comfy Midgardian clothes. Thor slips into a simple black t-shirt and set of blue jeans before meandering out to the kitchen to grab a beer and maybe something to eat.

“Nice job on the repairs today. That damn thing has been teetering for months.” Clint says.

“Removing it was simple, but keeping little bits from falling down to the street and hurting people is what is so difficult. I am glad the worst of it is almost finished.” Thor says.

“Have no fear, the food is here.” Tony says with a small smile as he carries in four large boxes of pizza. Tony knows that Thor will eat an entire one all by himself. The blonde god has a hollow leg.

“Oh sweet! I’m starving.” Natasha says. Bruce grabs a stack of plates from the kitchen and the crew dives in. Libations are distributed as music is turned on and the Avengers relax after another long day of hard work.

“Why is Canadian bacon and pineapple considered Hawaiian?” Steve asks as he swallows down his bite.

“I don’t know. Maybe because Hawaii was colonized by the Canadians.” Bruce says. Steve smiles at him. He’s not completely clueless.

“So Thor buddy, is the beer in Asgard as good as ours?” Tony asks.

“Aye and more. Asgardian ale is brewed with the apples of Idunn and is as golden sunlight upon the tongue. Midgardian beer cannot hope to compete.” Thor says. He misses home but he has been on campaigns before, one lasted for an entire two years. And as campaigns go, this one has been one of the more comfortable front lines he’s lived on. The fields of Svartleheim did not have pizza or such amiable company.

“Sir, I am picking up strange energy readings out on the balcony.” Jarvis chimes in to inform Tony.

“What kind of energy readings?” Tony says.

“Unknown. They appear to be of alien origin.” The AI says. A small green light no

bigger than a marble appears on the balcony then. Bright like the light at the end of Daisy's dock it hovers in mid-air as it slowly grows in size.

"Everybody suit up. We don't know what this is." Tony says as he gets into position to have his Iron Man suit erected around him. Mjolnir flies up into Thor's hand as Clint grabs his arrows and Natasha grabs her guns. Steve's shield is at the ready. Bruce just stands there. He doesn't have a cool toy to play with. Maybe he should take off his shirt or something?

The green light bursts like a firework in the July night sky, momentarily blinding everyone. The light is gone. On the balcony, lying in a heap is a very skinny blue creature.

Hypocrisy

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The group all approaches Loki slowly and pensively. Thor already knows that the blue skin means that the creature is either Jotunn, Cree, or a couple of other alien species known to him. It looks too small to be a Jotunn and wretchedly skinny. For a moment Thor thinks the creature is dead until he sees the chest moving ever so slightly with quiet breathing.

“Jesus! I don’t know what the fuck it is but E. T. needs a sandwich.” Tony says looking at the pathetic skinny form curled up in the fetal position unconscious on the ground. Bruce leaps into action pushing Loki onto his back giving the group the first full view of his face. Loki’s raven hair is dull and brittle from malnourishment. His face is gaunt like the rest of his poor body. He looks so young. Bruce opens one of Loki’s eyes to check for dilation.

“His entire eye is blood red. I don’t know if that’s normal but I’m guessing it’s not.” Bruce announces.

“He is Jotunn.” Thor says low like a growl. Everyone turns to look at him. “Jotunn eyes are entirely red.”

“What’s a Jotunn?” Everyone asks almost in unison.

“Frost Giants. They are monstrous creatures. This one must be a child given its stature, or an adult with severely stunted growth from malnourishment. Either way I will put this one out of its misery.” Thor says as he steps forward and begins swinging Mjolnir, looking to bash the Jotunn’s head in.

“Whoa! Whoa! Stop! You think this is a child and you want to kill it?” Bruce says horrified.

“Yes of course. The nine realms are better off without their kind. It probably won’t survive given its current state. Killing it is a mercy.” Thor says matter-of-factly.

“Look. I’m all for killing aliens that are invading earth, but I’ve got a problem with just exterminating one loan alien that is a) a child, b) unarmed, and c) clearly starving. It is defenseless. Let it at least wake up and explain why it came here to us.” Bruce says.

“Jotunns are never unarmed. Frost Giants have the ability to summon ice from within their bodies and fashion ice blades and other blunt weapons out of nothing. This creature is not defenseless.” Thor says as a warning. Everyone notes the venom and hatred dripping from Thor. They’ve never seen this side of him before. Thor is usually such a cheerful happy fellow, though often arrogant and even spoiled. His princely title sometimes shows more often than the team likes. Humility is not one of Thor’s virtues.

“Be that as it may I think it deserves a chance to at least speak for itself before we condemn it to death. It came here, directly to us, looking like this. It is clearly vulnerable and may have even come to seek our help. We aren’t doing anything until we learn more about him.” Bruce shoots back.

“You’ll regret this decision.” Thor grumbles. Bruce picks up Loki and carries him inside. Thor mutters a warning about frost bite but Bruce ignores him. Bruce is starting to feel a little

green around the gills and not because he is sick. The others are on the fence. On the one hand Thor knows more about this creature than any of them and they should trust his judgment as their team mate. On the other hand, the boy just looks so damn pathetic they can't help feeling sympathy for him.

Bruce takes Loki into the medical bay and lays his limp body on a gurney. It is then that Bruce pays attention to the large satchel slung across his chest. He removes it and opens it up. He pulls out the spell book and admires the craftsmanship that went into making it. It is very beautiful. He wishes he could understand the language. The writing is elegant. The others watch him as he places it on a table. Bruce then pulls out a small coin purse.

"Wow. These look like real gold." Bruce says. There appear to be ten of them.

"Let me see those." Thor says darkly.

"These came from the family fortune of the House of Faurbati. Only a member of the royal family can touch this. This Jotunn is a thief!" Thor says.

"How is that you recognize these coins?" Natasha asks.

"The symbol on the coins is the mark of the House of Laufey." Thor says.

"But Thor, this kid has that same marking on his ribcage, look here." Bruce says. Thor sneers as he leans closer to inspect the little blue parasite. His eyes go wide when he recognizes the blood lines of Laufey's family. This Jotunn is a prince!

"It cannot be." Thor whispers.

"Who is he?" Steve asks.

"He is a Prince of Jotunnheim." Thor says with thinly veiled disgust.

"Do you know him?" Tony asks. Thor turns to look at him.

"I would never associate with such scum, and neither should you." Thor says as though his voice is made of battery acid.

"Why?" Steve asks.

"A couple thousand years ago King Laufey brought his army here to Midgard with the intent to conquer and exterminate the mortal race. My father King Odin intervened and saved your species from annihilation and to ensure that they did not attempt to do so again he took from them their most valuable possession, The Casket of Ancient Winters." Thor explains.

"Okay. So what is so special about this Casket?" Tony asks.

"The Casket was created over 20,000 years ago by King Laufey's ancestors. They bound the life force and magic of their entire world into a single item. From it all life on Jotunnheim is possible. It is a powerful weapon and in taking it from them Asgard struck a blow to the very heart of soul of the Frost Giants. Only a member of the royal family can wield it. This creature came here to seek me out. If he thinks I will hand it back over to his people out of pity, he will be sorely disappointed." Thor says with his arms crossed. Bruce reaches back into Loki's bag and pulls out the last item.

"They tried to exterminate the human race?" Clint asks.

“Aye.” Thor says.

“Oh man that smells rank. Whatever it is, it’s rancid.” Bruce says and chucks it in the trash.

“That was probably the only food this boy had left.” Steve says. “I’m going to get him something to eat.”

“Something light and easy to digest. Canned soup and maybe a pb&j.” Bruce recommends. Steve nods and heads to the kitchen. Just then Loki stirs in his sleep.

When Loki opens his eyes he squints. The light is so bright here. It is also hot, insufferably so. Tony always keeps his tower temperature at 72 degrees, but for Loki it feels like 110. Loki notices movement in his periphery.

“Is someone there?” He chokes out.

“It’s alright. You are safe. We found you and brought you inside.” Bruce says.

“The light is too bright. I can’t see.” Loki says weakly. Bruce turns off half of the overhead lights dimming the room.

“Thank you. Where am I? Is this Midgard?” Loki asks.

“Yes.” Thor says curtly.

“Is Midgard hot like this everywhere?” Loki asks. Everyone exchanges glances. Of course he’s hot-Duh! Bruce realizes that a hot bowl of soup is probably a bad idea.

“Unfortunately yes. I’m going to run a cold bath and fill it with ice for you. I’ll be right back.” Bruce says. “Jarvis, tell Steve to ditch the soup and to crack open the freezer and pull out anything ready to eat but don’t heat it up. Frozen fish sticks would be good if there are any.” Bruce orders.

“I will tell him.” The AI chimes.

“Who are you?” Tony asks politely. Loki slowly sits up and looks around the room. These mortals dress strangely but look like Aesir in their bodies, especially the large blonde one.

“My name is Loki.” He says quietly. He does not give his sir name. He fears these people may seek retribution if they find out who he is.

“Loki. Nice name. What brings you to earth?” Tony asks.

“Sanctuary. My world is dying.” Loki says.

“Why did you seek us out specifically?” Clint asks.

“I didn’t. I could have landed anywhere on your world, provided I performed the spell correctly. It is a miracle I am here alive. I did not think it would work.” Loki says. Thor snorts derisively. He doesn’t believe Loki for a second.

“You performed a spell?” Tony says with his eyebrows quirked. “Like magic?” He asks.

“Yes.” Loki replies.

“If you didn’t think the spell would work why did you try it?” Natasha asks.

“It was the only option left to avail me.” Loki says.

“From what?” Natasha presses.

“From death. My world is suffering a bit of upheaval at the moment. My father.....was killed in front of me right before I left.” Loki says mournfully.

“King Laufey is dead?” Thor yells loudly.

“How is it you know me mortal? I never gave you my father’s name.” Loki asks pointedly. Thor steps forward and that is when Loki notices Mjolnir for the first time. Thor the Thunder God, Lightning Bringer, Frost Giant Slayer, Wielder of the Hammer of Death is standing but a few feet away from him with a murderous expression.

“No! Noooooo!” Loki screams. He gets up and tries to flee the room but Thor catches him by the hair and yanks him back.

“Why are you here?!” Thor booms at him.

“I told you.” Loki cries.

“I don’t believe you, you lying piece of bilgesnipe filth! Did you come here to find me? Did you think I would pity you and give over the Casket out of benevolence? The only mercy I will give you is death!” Thor growls.

“Thor stop!” Tony yells. He still has his Iron Man suit on and he is aiming his fireball palm right at the golden god. Natasha has her gun pointed at him as does Clint with his arrow.

“You would turn on me!? Your shield brother in defense of this....This lowly piece of Jotunn trash!?” Thor bellows.

“My house, my rules, now put him down. He hasn’t done anything wrong.” Tony says.

“He is the son of the man that tried to remove all mortals from this world. He is the enemy!” Thor yells.

“I AM NOT MY FATHER!” Loki yells at him. “You hypocrite! Your father sits on his golden throne and turns a blind eye to my people as they all slowly suffer and die! He who protected this mortal world because of a belief that mortals have the right to exist, and yet he himself will be responsible for letting my entire race go extinct as punishment! Have we not suffered enough for my father’s mistake?” Loki voice cracks at the last. If he is going to die at the hands of Thor, he’ll be damned if he goes out begging like a pathetic street rat. Hot tears stream down Loki’s face as he glares defiantly back at Thor.

“No. You Jotunns are nothing but monsters. The nine realms will be better off without your species. The Casket will remain in Asgard and your world will die.” Thor hisses as he tightens his grip on Loki’s hair.

It becomes clear in this moment to the Avengers that this is a very old rivalry born of politics and racism. Loki’s father is guilty of trying to commit genocide against the human race, and Odin is currently passively committing genocide against the Jotunn race.

“Put him down Thor.” Bruce says quietly. He is back from running Loki’s ice bath and

heard all of their exchange. His eyes are tinted green and he is one breath away from Hulking out. Thor listens. Even he knows it is best to not tempt fate.

“Come with me. I’ll get you cooled off and fed.” Bruce says calmly.

“Thank you.” Loki says.

Chapter End Notes

I hope I made Thor out to be a big enough dick. It'll be better when he eats crow later. Let me know your thoughts.

Hospitality

Bruce guides Loki down the hall to his room and to his private bath. It was the room closest to the medical bay anyway. Steve is there and he has a plate full of frozen fish sticks. Steve smiles at Loki politely.

“Ah...We didn’t know what you would like or if you eat this sort of thing. If it is too cold I can heat it up for you.” Steve says offering Loki the plate. Loki’s eyes go wide at the mountain of fresh frozen meat being offered to him.

“For me? All of it?” Loki asks as he licks his lips.

“Well yeah.” Steve says.

“Thank you.” Loki says solemnly. He takes the plate and sits down quickly on Bruce’s bed and devours the first fish stick like it is ambrosia. He even moans as he chews his food. Steve feels a little unsettled when he sees Loki’s sharp pointy teeth for the first time. Bruce watches him quietly as well, feeling relieved that the poor man finally has something in his stomach. Within a couple of minutes the plate is clean and Loki belches loudly.

“Forgive me.” Loki says feeling mortified.

“It’s alright. The food was good?” Steve asks.

“It was the most divine thing I have tasted in a very long time.” Loki says.

“I have your ice bath ready if you want.” Bruce says.

“Yes please the heat of the realm is excruciating.” Loki says. Loki walks into the bathroom. This room is also too bright. “The light....it hurts my eyes.” Loki says.

“Jarvis would you dim the lights to 50% please?” Bruce asks.

“Yes Master Banner.” Jarvis replies.

“There is that voice again.” Loki looks up at the ceiling in wonder.

“Oh that is just one of Tony’s toys.” Steve says. Loki blinks as the lighting level becomes more comfortable for him.

“Loki, we know we are total strangers and if you don’t want our help you can decline it, but given your rather frail state it would put our minds at ease if we helped you in and out of the bath. The sudden temperature change could make you dizzy.” Bruce says gently.

“Normally I would decline such an offer, but you have shown me more kindness in the last 10 minutes than I have been shown in the last 10 years. And I am feeling a bit wobbly.” Loki says. Loki is only wearing a skirt of sorts made of animal hide. It looks very old and worn out and he is without any other decoration or adornment. Loki reaches to his side and unlaces the threading holding up his clothing and lets the skirt drop to the floor. Bruce and Steve help Loki step into the bath and Loki sighs in relief as the refreshing cool water restores him and saves him from the unbearable heat. It is as Loki is sitting that Bruce gets an eyeful of *everything* that is between Loki’s legs. His eyebrows arch in surprise but he does not say anything.

“You’re welcome to soak in there as long as you like. When you are ready to get out just speak to the ceiling. Jarvis will hear you and he’ll tell us.” Steve says.

“I thank you both. You have been most kind.” Loki says as he lays back in the sweet bliss of ice and cold.

Elsewhere in the tower....

“I’m going to lay down some ground rules right now. This is my home and as of this minute Loki is my guest. If you wish to remain a guest here as well you will refrain from manhandling him, hitting him, or killing him. He will stay here and we will learn more about him. If I feel he is a threat I will deal with him. If you cannot contain your temper with him then you will keep your distance or you can get out.” Tony says firmly to Thor. He puts on a stern face but even Iron Man feels a little sweat under arms at the thought of chastising a god.

“As you say man of Iron. This is your home and I will respect your wishes.” Thor says bitterly. Even he knows it is bad manners to flout the ancient laws of hospitality. “I will keep my distance from the Jotunn.” Thor says and turns to walk back to his new room to sulk. He doesn’t want to show that he is embarrassed. Why do his friends not understand? Why do they feel it necessary to retrain him? The Jotunn should not be here.

Everyone breathes a sigh of relief when Thor leaves the room. “Okay we got to figure this out.” Natasha says.

“I can’t believe Thor just turned on a dime like that. He really fucking hates Frost Giants.” Tony says astonished.

“What are we going to do about Loki?” Natasha asks. Bruce and Steve return to the group then.

“Where’s Thor?” Bruce asks.

“His room.” Clint informs.

“We’ve got to do something about Loki.” Bruce says.

“Yeah that is what we were just saying.” Tony adds.

“Look he’s sitting in the ice tub right now and he’s been fed but long term I don’t know what we are going to do with the guy. He’s uncomfortable above 45 degrees and he can’t leave the tower. He’ll stick out like a sore thumb. It’s obvious he can’t go home, but I just don’t see how the poor guy could live a normal life here. Beyond feeding him a garbage truck full of fish sticks until he looks healthy again I have no game plan.” Bruce says.

“We’ll cross that bridge when we come to it. We obviously are not going to get that problem solved tonight, but what are we going to do about Thor?” Steve asks.

“I laid out some old school medieval hospitality rules on him. He seems to respect those at least. I think it will be best if he and Loki are kept as separated as possible.” Tony says.

“I’ve never seen such a nice guy turn into such an asshole so quickly. I mean is it just me or is Thor really racist?” Clint says.

“Yeah, I get it. Blue skin, blood red eyes, long black fingernails, and the ability to summon ice. Loki is the stuff of nightmares and he’s a runt. I imagine a taller larger version of him

must be something Thor's people are really afraid of." Bruce says. Everyone nods.

"You seem to have taken a shining to the guy." Clint says.

"Yeah. I know what it's like to be called a monster-and that's another thing. Loki being a guy I mean. Steve when we were helping Loki into the bath did you notice anything different about him?" Bruce asks.

"If you mean between his legs I tried to avoid looking directly at it." Steve says.

"Well I got a full view of what he has down there. Loki is a full hermaphrodite. He could easily be referred to as she." Bruce explains. "I don't know if that is typical for his species since he is also short for his race; he may just be a medical oddity. I'd ask him but I don't want to be rude." Bruce says. Steve looks sad then and even a little pissed as he realizes Thor was manhandling a woman (with a penis). He also feels a little dirty at having seen Loki naked and touched him and all.

"What are we going to do about a sleeping arrangement tonight? The ice bath is keeping Loki comfortable for now but he can't sleep in there. He could drown." Steve asks.

"There's a large walk in freezer in the industrial kitchen two floors down. We could put a cot and some pillows and blankets in there. I bet he would find it comfy." Tony says.

"I think that'll work, at least for tonight. During the day tomorrow will be different. He'll be uncomfortable the moment he leaves the fridge." Bruce says.

"Ice packs. Lots of them and big." Steve says. They all look at him. "Hey if it worked for me for 70 years it could work for him."

"I could go down to my lab and construct a vest with some water tubing in it and fill it full of coolant. I could probably make some matching pants too." Tony says.

"Hey that would work." Bruce says. "We could use that special fabric firefighters use to keep them insulated from heat."

"Actually there is a new spandex like fabric that athletes use that can do much the same thing. It would fit better." Tony says as he gets excited from his nerd-on. Bruce smiles.

"Pardon me sirs, but Mr. Laufeyson is finished with his bath." Jarvis chimes.

"Okay. I think we've got a plan of action. For tonight at least. Go team." Tony says.

The Last Supper

Chapter Summary

Thor is still a dick, but he's going to be sorry soon enough.

“You made this for me?” Loki looks at Tony with a mixture of gratitude and concern. The clothing is odd looking but Loki cannot deny its wonderful cooling effects. The long sleeve tunic is snug fitting and has inner tubing filled with a cold liquid that makes him feel very comfortable. The pants are also snug fitting. Unfortunately the whole outfit highlights just how skinny he is. Tony offers him a second set of outer clothing to hide the cooling suit, along with a pair of sunglasses. The T-shirt and jeans seem strange to Loki but everyone else is wearing them as well, so he accepts them gladly.

He slept on a makeshift bed last night in a wonderful room filled with frozen meat. Loki ate an entire frozen salmon and his full belly now sticks out like he is pregnant. He has never felt so full. These people have done more for him in one night than his own family has in more years than he can remember. Who are these people and what do they expect in return? Clearly they are Thor’s friends, but they did not approve of the way he treated him, and Thor loves and respects them enough to not bash their heads in for defying him. The situation is strange and precarious. What happens now?

“Yeah, I got excited and couldn’t sleep so I spent a few hours in the lab last night constructing it.” Tony says gleefully like a kid giving his mommy a homemade macaroni necklace.

“Thank you. I worried how I would manage in this heat. I will be forever in your debt. You have shown me so much compassion.” Loki says eloquently.

“It was the least we could do after the welcome you received.” Natasha says as she shoots Thor the evil eye. He is sitting on the couch watching a football game trying to ignore the group as they fawn over Loki. Loki bites his tongue. He does not want to stir the pot.

“I know nothing of your world beyond the stories I was told as a child. Your world is nothing like I imagined.” Loki says as he looks out the window at the vast New York City skyline and its people. “Will your people hate me for what my father tried to do? Does your species still carry its righteous anger with my species?” Loki asks.

“Loki this is the first we’ve heard of it. I’ve had Jarvis go through all the recorded histories from all the various peoples that existed at the time of the invasion. Beyond a couple of Norse mythologies of varying detail and accuracy, there is no record of your people. The human race has forgotten the incident.” Tony explains.

“Praise the Norns for small miracles.” Loki says quietly. He looks down on the street and notices something and a thought occurs to him. “If I were to go outside, how would your people react to me?” Loki asks.

“Not well. At first people would stare at you and think you are a strange performer wearing makeup or something. But if anyone stared at you long enough to figure out you’re not human the people would panic. We recently suffered an attack from an alien race called the Chitauri. The City

suffered a great deal of damage and a lot of people died. Humans are a little scared of aliens like you at the moment.” Steve explains. Loki bites his lip at the mention of the Chitauri. He knows that name...from somewhere. His father! A few years ago a man came to court and spoke with Laufey behind closed doors, but Loki ever the trickster and nosy little spy overheard their exchange. The Man Titan left Jotunnheim without getting what he wanted.

“Then I will either have to spend my life on this world in hiding or find a way to blend in.” Loki says. “Are there colder places to live in this realm?” Loki asks.

“Yes. The northern parts of Alaska would be really comfortable for you I think. It is sparsely populated up there. It would be a lonely life but I think you could make something of it.” Steve says.

“Yeah, I don’t think blending in is going to be an option for you.” Clint adds sadly.

“Not necessarily. I may be able to cast a spell to change my appearance. There are a couple of illusion spells I can try.....but illusions would not resolve my constant discomfort with this heat. What I really need is something more akin to a shape shifting spell. I’ll have to think on it.” Loki says mostly to himself as he thinks out loud.

“That book you brought with you, is that a magic spell book?” Tony asks greedily. He wants to read it.

“Yes it is. If you are curious about learning the art I would be more than happy to teach you what I know.” Loki says.

“Are you serious?!” Tony and Bruce say in unison like a couple of nerds.

“Yes of course. It is the least I could do for all the kindness you have shown me.” Loki says.

“I’m Harry Potter.” Tony says.

“What! I’m the one with the glasses. If anything I’m Harry and you...you’re Hermione.” Bruce says.

“Hermione wishes she was this fabulous.” Tony says flamingly. Loki looks at the two and wonders what the hell they are talking about.

“Ignore them... they are just being silly.” Natasha says after spotting the confusion on Loki’s face. “Tell us about yourself, your life. We want to know more about where you come from.” She says. Natasha is both genuinely curious and playing the part of investigator. In spite of the horrible way Thor treated Loki, Natasha knows that Thor’s concerns may well be justified. She needs to be sure they are not making the mistake of aiding the enemy as Thor has suggested.

The group hunkers down around the dinner table. Tony orders food delivered and everyone digs into the strange assortment he has selected as they listen to Loki tell the tale of his life in a world of ice. They receive a delivery of pizza, Thai food, sushi, McDonald’s French Fries, fresh fruit platters, and some gourmet hors d’oeuvres. Loki immediately goes for the sushi. He loves the fish.

“My elders always spoke of life before the Casket was taken away. I’ve never known life with it while it was in my realm. I was born around the end of the war with Asgard you see. I remember my world was healthier when I was young. We had plenty of food back then and I remember the bright red fire blossoms that used to bloom. I haven’t seen them in two hundred years. A lot of our plant life slowly started dying off over the centuries and did not return to us. It was in the last decade that all the large plants failed and the beasts we relied on to hunt for food began to starve. I

knew the end was near when I heard the first rumors of people in the far villages turning to the last resort for survival.” Loki says.

“What is the last resort?” Clint asks. Loki eyes look haunted and he looks around at the spread of amazing food before him, a feast in its own right. Everyone swallows hard as they realize what he is alluding to. The frost giants started eating each other. “I didn’t dare venture outside the palace walls after that. I began working in earnest on a spell that could take me far away to safety. I cannot impress upon you how lucky I am to be here.” He says.

On the far side of the room Thor has stopped listening to the television. He’s been listening intently to everything Loki has said. He knew the Jotunns were monsters. Loki just proved it by admitting his kinfolk were eating each other. His obvious ploy to cultivate pity may work on the mortals but it will not work on him! Loki is a weak pathetic runt. It is a miracle he survived among those monsters at all, probably because he wields magic like a woman. His friends will see. The monster will reveal his true colors soon enough and then they will beg Thor to kill him, if they don’t do it themselves.

“I’ve always wondered what life was like in the other realms. When I was a child I had dreams of traveling to places like Vanaheim, and Alfheim, and even Asgard but those hopes were dashed quickly enough. I learned at an early age that we were isolated. None of the other realms wanted anything to do with us. We were stuck on our world and not given the political opportunity to redeem ourselves. The only time others from outside our world came to visit was when they wanted to steal something from us or use us. Though, the last few decades became rather peaceful as we had nothing of value left to take.” Loki says. Thor has had enough. He takes great exception to this last lie.

“Your people are the thieves Jotunn. Many times have my men had to dispatch your kind for trespassing in the outlands.” Thor says darkly.

“Those were starving refugees! Desperate people who paid smugglers their entire life savings for transport off world and then dumped in a place that guaranteed their demise!” Loki yells.

“That is because your pathetic people did not know how to fend for themselves. They didn’t know how to hunt, or build structures, or make things with their hands.” Thor yells back.

“That is a vile lie. The very wall you look upon each and every day in your pristine golden palace was constructed by my ancestors! We were a race of builders and craftsmen. But after our defeat the others realms were too intimidated to offer Jotunnheim aid. When my people tried to fend for themselves their settlements were burned.” Loki yells.

“Just as your people froze and destroyed the human settlements on Midgard! Your people got what they deserved!” Thor returns.

“And what is that exactly? Genocide? My people have suffered enough for their crime. We have endured the worst possible fate any race of people could imagine, but even now it is not too late. My species can be saved, if it were only shown a shred of mercy!” Loki cries.

“Your people are weak and pathetic. My people would not have turned to such monstrous methods of survival. We would have at least died with our dignity.” Thor says arrogantly.

“Oh is that so?” Loki says quietly. “You’ve never known hunger have you Thunderer?” Loki says. Thor sneers at him but says nothing. “I challenge you. I challenge you, Prince Thor of Asgard to go seven days without food.” Loki says. Thor’s eyes go wide. He has never been challenged in such a way before. That this puny little runt would dare.....it is no matter.

“I accept your challenge.” Thor says haughtily. A tiny smirk plays upon Loki’s lips. Even if Thor manages to last the entire week without food the pain he will feel from hunger will be so searing it will teach him a lesson he’ll never forget. Even if Thor wins, he’ll still lose.

Tony and the others watched the whole exchange coming close to interrupting but they are glad they didn’t. It is evident to everyone that Thor has made a terrible mistake and is about to learn a very painful lesson. The Avengers approve.

Magnetism

It is agreed that for seven days Thor will not leave the tower and Jarvis will monitor Thor at all times both for safety and to make sure he doesn't cheat. The first day is no big deal for Thor. He has been on campaigns in desolate places before and had to go all day without a good meal. By the end of the first day Thor's stomach protests loudly but Thor ignores it. He's been through worse before.

Loki spent his second day on earth watching television. Lots of it. Loki had questions about everything. What manner of transportation is that? What is soda? What is the Internet? What currency do humans use? What is a phone? How do you cook food? How does the stove work? How the hell do you eat food that is the temperature of the sun? What's a computer? How many stairs does a person have to climb to reach the top of this building? What's an elevator? The team loves his inquisitiveness but after a while they need a break.

"Education time over. Let's eat." Steve says hoping a mouth full of food will slow Loki down. The guy is like a great big toddler learning about the world for the first time. It is endearing but a little exhausting after a while. Serving hot meals is a logistical problem with Loki. Even room temperature food is considered hot to him and hot food is just plain inedible. Since Loki has shown a large fondness of fresh fish Tony decides to slice a whole salmon fillet thin and serve it raw, sashimi style. Everybody else is having spaghetti.

"You did not have to go out of your way preparing a special meal just for me." Loki says feeling a little embarrassed.

"You need every calorie you can get and since we don't know what your stomach can handle it is best to stick with what we know you can handle. Besides, salmon is very healthy. After the spaghetti has cooled down a little you can try it and see if you like it." Bruce says.

Thor is once again on the couch alone. The smell of his dinner wafting through the air. His stomach growls loudly but Thor ignores it. Thor finds he hungers not just for food but also for company. His friends have ignored him since Loki's arrival and he is feeling bitter and rejected. He has never felt rejection before. Never in all his life has he ever felt unwanted, and it hurts. Thor wants to bash Loki's head in with Mjolnir and scream at his friends for not paying attention to him. Really, what is so special about Loki anyway?

Loki has only been here a day and he already looks much better. He smiles widely and has very animated limbs when he speaks. It would look completely normal if Loki didn't look like a dancing blue skeleton. The group exchanges backstories and histories with one another and Loki talks more about his magic and what he can do. Tony and Bruce can't wait to start learning magic.

Loki swallows down the last of the fish and though he feels full he cannot resist his instinct to stuff his face when so much wonderful food is at the ready and being offered so freely. "Is the spaghetti safe for me to try now?" Loki asks.

"I put a plate in the fridge. It should be fully cool by now." Steve says. He fetches it and places it in front of Loki. Loki twirls the noodles around the fork prongs like he saw the others do during dinner and places the first bite in his mouth. The texture is strange and the flavor is completely alien. It takes Loki a minute to decide if he likes it or not. He finds that he does. It is very flavorful. The explosion of tomatoes, herbs, garlic, and brown ground beef is an exotic mix Loki has nothing to compare to. He loves it. He digs in and starts shoveling it into his mouth with all the grace of an elephant eating hay.

“Hey Mikey I think he likes it.” Clint says with a grin. By the time Loki is done his shirt is covered with little micro splatters of marinara meat sauce. The red dripping from his chin is positively adorable. Loki dabs his chin with his napkin but it does little to restore his dignity. His cheeks blush purple with embarrassment.

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Thor awakens on the second day of his fast with a throbbing headache. He feels as though he drank an entire barrel of ale. But this is a headache induced by hunger and low blood sugar. His pain is just beginning. Even when he was stationed in desolate places in other inhospitable realms Thor was always able to hunt and kill some small woodland critter if needed to feed himself. Thor is beginning to realize that he has never hungered like this before, but he is not deterred. He will be victorious and show that pathetic Jotunn what true endurance looks like.

He showers and gets dressed before heading out the living room to join the others. The smell of breakfast is like a slap in the face. He salivates immediately as he hears the others chatter over coffee and pancakes. Loki is enjoying an iced coffee and a bowl full of something called cereal. The sweetness and vibrant colors of the fruity loops is the most delicious thing Loki has ever eaten. He’s on his fourth bowl of the stuff.

Thor shuffles to the couch with a scowl on his face. The others sigh heavily. Thor is going to be a drag to be around this week. Hopefully the big blonde oaf will learn something from all of this. They can only hope.

After breakfast Loki pulls out his spell book and reads out loud the first chapter to his friends. Everyone is excited. Loki is going to show them real magic today and maybe even teach them how to do some.

“The first thing I am going to do is help each of you find your center. Anthony, if you would be so kind as to place your hands in mine?” Loki asks. Everyone else is sitting Indian style on the floor as they watch Loki and Tony join hands and close their eyes. Loki reaches out with his magic to find Tony’s aura but is shocked to find.....nothing. No magical ability of any kind whatsoever. Loki has never encountered this before. Every Jotunn has in them innate magical ability. He’s never come across anyone so handicapped. Loki opens his eyes.

“I’m sorry but you do not possess the gift.” Loki says looking befuddled. He turns his head to look at the others and a terrible thought crosses his mind. “Someone else please. Miss Natasha.” Loki says. Nat jumps up and takes Tony’s spot, who is looking very much like a kicked puppy. Loki reaches out to find her aura only to find she is bereft of magical ability as well.

“Tell me, are there any people on your world that wield magic?” Loki asks when he opens his eyes.

“Not that we know of for sure. We have people called magicians but all they are, are tricksters that make it look like they can do magic when they are really just fooling the eye of the viewer. Real magic is not something people on this world actually believe in.” Natasha says.

“Believe in? You make it sound like it is a made up thing.” Loki says.

“Magic is a made up thing here on Earth. It doesn’t exist.” Natasha says.

“I will continue testing each of you but I fear you may be correct.” Loki says. Clint gets up next and he is found wanting as well. When Loki tests Steve, however, Loki breaks out in a cold sweat.

“You have come in contact with something very ancient and very powerful. Something considered mythical even among my people.” Loki says.

“The tesseract. Thor took it back to Asgard after the battle here in New York. It’s in Asgard’s keeping now.” Steve says.

“I see. I wonder...” Loki closes his eyes and reaches out to feel the magic pulse of this world. What he finds is Mjolnir shining like a beacon in the dark. The only source of magic Loki can detect nearby. The natural magic inherent to Midgard is so miniscule that performing even the most basic of spells would be a monumental task. Midgard is a magic desert.

Loki looks within himself to see if he can still summon the ice. The air around him chills and the windows begin to fog as an ice blade forms on his hand. At least he can still do this.

“Whoa! Cool!” Clint says with the wonderment of a child. “Are you going to teach us how to do that?”

“I am sorry everyone but this is an ability that comes natural to my species. As for teaching you magic I am afraid I cannot. None of you possess the gift. I did not know Midgard was so barren. I think I now understand how and why I ended up at your doorstep.” Loki says.

“You do?” Bruce asks.

“Yes. I reached out looking for the natural lay lines in which I could tap magical power only to find none. Instead the only magical power I could see was Thor’s hammer. I think my teleportation spell brought me to the strongest and possibly only source of magical power on Midgard.” Loki says.

“You mean like magnetism?” Tony asks.

“Something like that yes.” Loki says. Everyone turns and looks at Thor then. The irony is not lost on anyone.

The Sixth Day

Loki awakens feeling more refreshed, energetic, and healthy than he has in a long time. It is only his fourth day on Midgard and already he is feeling restored. His body is holding onto every calorie he consumes like it is a life preserver and already some of the gauntness in his face is filling in. His new friends are constantly putting something to eat in front of him. These new delicacies that he has been eating are very nourishing and satisfying. For the first time in a long time, Loki feels joy. It is as he is stepping out of the refreshing cold shower in Natasha's room, that he is overcome with the unadulterated relief of it all. All the hardship, pain, and horror he has endured to survive to this point envelopes Loki then like a tidal wave. He crumples on the floor in a heap a sobbing crying mess. Jarvis alerts Natasha.

"Miss Natasha, Loki appears to be in some sort of distress." The AI informs.

"How so?" She asks as she gets up and marches down to her room. The walk in freezer in the industrial kitchen doesn't come with its own bathroom suite. Loki's been using hers on account that he has girl parts. The guys wanted to respect his modesty.

"He appears to be crying my lady." Jarvis says. Natasha knocks gently on the bathroom door.

"Loki? Are you okay?" She asks gently. She can hear him sobbing through the door.

"Honey I'm going to come in. Okay?" She says. When she only hears more sobbing she puts her hand on the knob and turns it. Loki didn't lock the door. Good. She pokes her head and finds the floor covered in a sheet of ice and Loki curled up with his arms wrapped around his knees.

"Loki?"

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry! It all...It all just hit me! All of it! My people are gone and I'm all alone! They're all suffering and dying and I'm here getting fat and enjoying myself. How can I call myself a Prince? I have no people. They're all probably dead by now. I'm a Prince of Nothing! I'm probably the last of my species....and all because of Thor's father!" Loki cries out in despair as Natasha pulls him into her embrace to cry. He sobs in her lap as she strokes his hair. Natasha feels anger then. How can Thor stand by and let this happen? How can he be this sweet loving honorable man to her people and the villain to Loki's? Natasha makes a decision then and there to make Thor's next few days a living hell. She lets Loki cry into her for more than an hour before he finally runs out of steam. She guides him back to the fridge downstairs and encourages him to take a nap. When she leaves Loki's "room" she hops on the elevator and heads down. She's going grocery shopping for a whole turkey and all the Thanksgiving trimmings.

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Thor's head is pounding like a drum and his stomach feels like the jagged point of a dull steak knife is twisting in his gut. He also feels weak, dizzy, and desperate. This is only the third day of the challenge and Thor is feeling his resolve beginning to waver. He doesn't even get out of bed, he feels so miserable and Norns know if he were to open the door to his room his nostrils would be flooded by the smell of all that damned food! So Thor lays there in bed curled up in the fetal position obsessing about food and thinking about how much he hates Loki. He's too hungry to sleep.

“Holy shit Nat! What is all of this?” Clint says as he ogles the spread on the dining room table.

“I wanted to do something special for Loki to make him feel better. I’m fixing him a giant plate with everything and sticking it in the freezer. It should be nice and cold for him in about 15 minutes. I’ll call out for dinner when it is.” She says. The table is covered with food. A roasted turkey, which has been filling the tower with its amazing aroma for hours, a spiral sliced ham, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, stuffing, rolls, green bean casserole, cranberry sauce, gravy, pumpkin pie, pecan pie, corn pudding, and spiked egg nog. The only thing missing is Thor’s starving face begging for scraps. Damn coward is hiding in his room.

Natasha had Tony and Bruce keep Loki occupied in the lab down in the basement. Loki got to look at all of Tony’s cool toys and play with them and learn new stuff. It’s been a fun day for him. It turns out Loki is very knowledgeable of geological materials and even knew of the periodic table of elements. He even knew of a couple of new elements way high up on the table that man had not discovered yet but has been trying in vain to manufacture in infinitesimal amounts in giant particle accelerators. Bruce and Tony both practically jizzed in their jeans at learning what the elements were and what they could do when gathered in large quantities. Loki is very smart. Tony and Bruce both love getting his input on things they are working on. Sometimes they have to sort of translate what they are talking about but once Loki figures it out his input inspires new waves of ideas in Tony and Bruce’s heads. They already both have ideas for some possible cancer cures, and new lighter stronger metal to replace steel and maybe a better more fuel efficient car engine.

Loki is moved to tears yet again when he is brought up to the feast Natasha has made for him. All throughout the meal Loki cries as he recounts horrifying story after story about his own life and that of his people. Loki apologizes over and over again for what his father tried to do the human race and Bruce grabs Loki and cradles him. It’s all anyone can do. By the end of the meal everyone is all cried out and hating the one person in the building that has the power to do something about all this.

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Day four and five pass incredibly slowly for Thor every second of everyday is torture and pain. He hasn’t slept. It’s impossible to sleep when you’re that hungry, though Thor thinks he might have passed out a couple of times. Thor tries not to think about food but how can he not when his stomach is constantly reminding him of its plight? On the evening of the fifth day a kind of euphoria overtakes Thor as true starvation sets in. He stumbles to the bathroom and fills a glass full of water drinking his fill and then some in the hope of fooling his stomach. It doesn’t work. Thor lays down on the bed and thinks of home. He misses his Asgardian friends. Things were not so difficult with them. He thinks of the feasts and the ale and the women. But his wakeful dream turns and suddenly Asgard’s feasting hall is dark and empty. Sif looks scrawny and desperate. Volstagg is a skeleton. Long into the night dark visions of Asgard starving plague Thor’s mind.

It is on the evening of the sixth day when Thor’s resolve completely crumbles. Thor feels overcome by panic and fear and all thought of the challenge leaves him then. His survival instinct has kicked in. Without thought Thor follows his impulse and his feet to the kitchen to find the refrigerator.

Most everyone is sitting on the couch when Thor emerges from his room for the first time in days. There is a pathetic desperation on Thor’s face none of the others have ever seen. They would feel sorry for him but they know this is a lesson he needs to learn. Loki is in the kitchen raiding the fridge again. He loves potato salad. Loki closes the door and there stands Thor eying

his food in a way that Loki is all too familiar.

“Have you come to apologize Thunder God? Admit defeat perhaps?” Loki says haughtily. Thor is filled with a sudden blinding rage and he tries to shove Loki out of the way to get to the food but Loki is ready for him. Thor is severely weakened from starvation and it takes little for Loki to knock him on his back. Loki calls upon his ice magic then and pins Thor to the floor with a formation of ice that wraps around Thor’s neck and torso. The others get up off the couch worried blood is about to be spilt.

“Let me pass!” Thor yells angrily.

“Who’s the pathetic Jotunn now? Stealing dried meat that is not yours from some Asgardian farmer’s smokehouse. You know it is wrong but you are desperate, aren’t you Thunderer?” Loki hisses at Thor as he stands over the man, his accusing gaze piercing and full of the anger of his people.

“The refugees that fled my world found no quarter, no mercy anywhere. They tried to keep to themselves in the cold mountains of distant places but they were hunted down like dogs. Their new settlements burned to the ground and any food they’d cultivated for themselves taken. When they stole food they were killed. I know these things because some of those people finally returned home and told my father of the brutality of your soldiers....and of you. You are the monster my people fear. Your father is the unforgiving demon that has no heart. In all the years my father has petitioned Asgard for forgiveness and leniency your father has never responded. I will spend the next 24 hours ensuring not a single crumb passes your lips so that you may know what it is to be pathetic. You will beg for mercy O Thunderer and in that moment you shall know the plight of a million starving Jotunns!” Loki seethes.

Tears drip out of Thor’s eyes into his hair line. He stops struggling in Loki’s grip and it is in this moment that Loki knows he has him. Thor’s heart breaks as the full horror of what he has done to the Jotunn people washes over him like a tsunami.

The Walls Have Heimdall's Ears

Loki lets Thor get up and the giant golden god lumbers back to his room in shame; his stomach still empty. It matters not. The inside of Thor's mind is a torrent of hatred and prejudice doing battle with knowledge and understanding. Jotunns are so ugly. Their hideous blue skin is the same shade of a dead man's corpse and their blood red eyes are the thing of nightmares. Their sharp teeth are like that of a shark and their long black finger nails are like eagle talons. They are twice the size of a typical Aesir and are as cold as the mountain top. They are hideous people. They are people. They are people who hunger for food, for mercy, and for understanding. They are people that feel love, and jealousy, joy, and sorrow. They are a people hated simply because of what they look like.

Thor spends his last night and day in his room thinking long and hard about every Jotunn encounter he has ever had. All the skirmishes in small villages near the mountains where he was called to exterminate a Jotunn infestation. He'd been so wrong. The Jotunn people needn't even search for refuge off their own world if they were simply given back the means to feed themselves. Thor thinks on the Casket of Ancient Winters. Only Odin can grant its return to Jotunnheim. No one, not even Thor can enter the weapons vault to remove it without the king's permission.

"I wonder if Thor is having a change of heart." Bruce says in passing.

"He'd better be or he's out of the club." Tony says. Everyone agrees. They let Thor hang around and play the part of the hero when he is guilty of passively committing evil against so many.

"I wonder if Thor will give you the Casket back." Natasha says to Loki.

"It's not Thor's to give. Odin has to release it to my people." Loki says. Loki has asked his own father King Laufey many times about where the Casket is held and even plotted ways of stealing it back. One time they even managed to smuggle several Jotunn warriors directly into the weapons vault of Asgard. They were never heard from again.

"Maybe our spoiled prince can talk some sense into his daddy." Clint says.

"Unlikely." Steve says. He knows the mindset of such men. The Nazi thought the way Odin and Thor think. A change of heart such as this has to be done in a very deep and personal way, like what Thor is going through. It still remains to be seen if Thor will change for the better. "If everything we've heard about Thor's father both from Thor and from myth is true, the Odin is fully aware of how Loki's people are suffering and just doesn't care. He could have stopped this at any time but he didn't and now that the entire Jotunn race is almost extinct he will not back off now, not now that his goal is in sight." Steve says, thinking of Auschwitz.

"I don't think my people can be saved now. They are too far gone. By now the only ones left that might still be alive only live because they have dined on the flesh of their own kin. No amount of food will ever bring that dignity back." Loki says.

"We still have to try Loki. We still have to hold out hope. Even if this generation is completely and permanently damaged they can still breed the next generation, a new generation that can start over and build from scratch." Steve says.

"Steve knows what he is talking about Loki. His generation endured some pretty horrific things." Bruce says.

"I have my doubts." Loki says.

On the morning of the eighth day Thor does not come out of his room. The challenge is over and he is well within his right to eat now, so when he fails to make an appearance at breakfast everyone becomes alarmed.

“Thor. Thor buddy wake up. Come eat.” Tony says shaking the big man’s arm. Thor just lays there and does not move. The guilt is overwhelming. He deserves his pain. Tony, Bruce, and Steve all manhandle Thor and make him get up. Thor doesn’t speak but goes where they take him. They plop him down in a chair at the breakfast table and shove a plate of food in front of him. The hunger in Thor’s gut roars like a lion and he grabs a glob of scrambled eggs with his bare hand and shoves it in his mouth. Though the food tastes utterly divine it is as bitterness and guilt upon his tongue. The nausea he feels is a mixture of unsettled stomach and self-disgust. Thor only manages to get down a slice of toast and some juice before he pushes his plate away.

“Give your stomach some time. Once it gets a chance to start working again the food won’t feel like a lead weight.” Bruce says.

“It is not the food that makes me feel ill.” Thor says quietly. He looks up at Loki then with eyes that display all the guilt and (dare Loki hope?) remorse. Thor sobs then, letting his tears fall into his juice cup.

“Forgive me.” He says weakly, sobbing like a small child. Loki moves forward then.

“I don’t need your tears Thunderer. I need your help. I need the Casket of Ancient Winters back to save my people and my world. I need you to give it to me.” Loki says gripping Thor’s jaw up to meet his gaze.

“My father will not give it to me. He is of the mindset I had not yesterday. He wants your people to perish. Once all the Jotunns are gone he can use the Casket to restore your world and mold it to his liking. He wants to colonize it with my kind.” Thor says. Loki spits on the ground in disgust.

“I knew it! Hypocrite! He is guilty of the same crime for which we were punished!” Loki hisses.

“Thor, if you don’t do something to stop this, your standing as a good man will disappear. You will not be a hero, not to us, and not to history.” Steve says.

“I cannot remove the Casket without his permission and I cannot defy my king.” Thor says.

“What if you are king?” Clint asks. “How far away is daddy from retirement anyway?”

“I will not kill my own father.” Thor says.

“Then you have to at least talk to him. Try to make him see reason!” Tony says feeling exasperated.

An explosion of rainbow light announces an arrival from Asgard and everyone turns to see the tall still figure of Heimdall standing outside.

“Holy shit, who is that?” Tony asks.

“Heimdall, our ever watchful gatekeeper. He sees and hears all.” Thor says. Everyone turns and looks at him.

“By all, do you mean he heard what we all just said?” Natasha asks.

“Yes.” Thor says. Holy shit, Heimdall is a super spy. The golden god opens the glass door and enters the apartment. He strides up to the group calmly, his hand folded in front of him in a non-aggressive pose.

“Hi there.” Bruce says.

“It is unwise to plot against Asgard’s king.” Heimdall says turning his all-seeing eyes to Clint.

“Great gatekeeper, please tell me, of my people how many still live?” Loki asks.

“I have watched your world deteriorate with great sadness dear prince. The great cities of Jotunnheim are now silent with only pockets of survivors that fight one another. There is no hope for them.” Heimdall says. Loki horrified expression pulls at the hearts of everyone.

“However, there is a small village in the north far removed and small in population. They live near the sea and their location is hard to reach by normal means. They blew up the mountain pass leading to their settlement, cutting them off from the rest of Jotunnheim. They have survived on the meager offerings of the dying ocean and number 547 people. They hunger but do not starve, but they will if mercy is not eventually given to them. There are smarter ways of saving your people Prince Loki.” Heimdall says.

“What do you suggest Heimdall?” Thor asks.

“It is as your friend said. Your father is getting older and though he is not ready to retire yet given time your coronation will come and you will be able to give over the Casket when you are crowned. The small population left still living need only to survive until that day comes. Aid can be rendered in secret.” Heimdall says.

“In my room back home on my desk there is a little red box. In that box lies my personal key to the treasury. Take it and use my own private funds to purchase food and smuggle it to the village.” Thor orders. Heimdall smiles. Long has he wished for Thor to open his eyes.

“As you wish my prince.” Heimdall says and turns to leave.

“And Heimdall, thank you for your discretion.” Thor says.

“I would not want the Allfather to turn against Midgard over a minor misunderstanding. What you do here on Midgard and whom you do it with is your business.” Heimdall says. “So long as you do not plot directly against the Allfather I needn’t report what I see and hear down here.”

Nineteen Days

There is an awkward tenseness that lingers in the tower for several days after the fasting challenge. Thor continues to avoid Loki, though now it is mostly out of shame. Loki doesn't know what to make of Thor's act of benevolence. He's afraid to hope for something more. He's afraid to hope that his people can be saved. Though Thor's direct intervention to save the last remaining remnants of his race means the world to Loki, he is once again reminded that the fate of his people is being dictated by Asgard. Loki is not in a grateful mood.

Loki spends his days in the lab with Tony and Bruce learning about earth and its people. Tony puts in movies of cultural relevance to teach Loki about earth and more specifically, American culture. They watch them as they work in the lab on whatever experiment that passes Tony's fancy. Loki continues wearing his sunglasses and cooling suit every day. It helps him get by, but he is by no means comfortable. Loki knows he needs a contingency plan. If the day should ever come that Thor does give Loki the Casket back, it could still be many years away. Loki needs to find a way to adapt and live in this world. Hell Odin may not even retire for another 50 years. 50 years is considered to be a very short period of time to people as long lived as the Aesir and Jotunn. Time takes on a different meaning for people facing imminent death, which is the case for all mortals and currently for Loki's people. Loki feels the passing of each day acutely. Time is the fire in which he burns.

"Hey Loki, want to work on that new propulsion system with me?" Tony asks.

"Nay Anthony. I was wondering if I might work on my magic for a while. I need a more practical long term solution to living on Midgard. This attire you have crafted for me has been a godsend but if I am to truly make a life for myself on this world I must find a way to alter my appearance and adapt my body to the heat." Loki says.

"I thought you said you can't do magic on earth?" Bruce asks.

"It's not that I can't, it is just very hard. There are no natural ley lines nearby. Mjolnir would give me the charge I need to practice what I must do but I am remiss to ask Thor for any favors." Loki says. The thought of being in debt to the spoiled prince of Asgard is too much for his pride to handle.

"Favor? Fuck he owes you big. If ever you were to ask anything of him, now is the moment. Strike while the iron is hot. Hell I bet Point Break would rub your feet if you asked him." Tony says.

"I don't know about that." Bruce interjects, but the point is made.

"I really don't feel like talking to him. Avoidance works for us." Loki says.

"Look, he's got something you need and you are going to be here for the foreseeable future and so is he so you two need to talk. Believe it or not, before you arrived we regarded Thor as a great guy, and he was fun to be around. I mean the curtain has been pulled back and the Wizard of Oz is a genocidal racist but now that he's been humiliated maybe you guys can, I don't know...get to know each other. Make nice. It would certainly ease tensions around here." Tony says.

"Look, we're not saying you and Thor have to become BFF's or anything but it would be nice to not have the weirdness vibe when the two of you are in the same room together." Bruce says.

"What's a BFF?" Loki asks.

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Thor hears a firm knock on his bedroom door and gets up from the bed to answer it. It is evening and he was about to tuck into bed wearing a set of deep burgundy satin pajama pants and no shirt. Though he is not surprised Loki has finally sought him out to speak in private, his appearance still unsettles him. The Jotunn race has always struck Thor as a group of animated demon possessed corpses with their cold blue skin and blood red eyes. Whenever Thor has a nightmare about anything, Jotunns are always in them.

“Yes.” Thor says and then clears his throat. Loki has not had the opportunity to stop and appreciate Thor’s physique purely for its beauty what with the hatred and racism and threat of extinction and all. Still, just because he hates Thor to his very core does not mean he is dead below the waist. Hubba Hubba.

“We need to talk.” Loki says with his arms folded.

“Of course. Come in.” Loki steps into Thor’s room and gives it a cursory glance about. Thor sits on the end of his bed and gestures to the lounge chair in the sitting area by the window for Loki. Loki declines it however, he prefers to stand.

“You and I, we have a long road ahead of us if we are to cultivate a relationship that anyone might consider amiable or friendly. Your gesture to render aid to the last survivors of my race means a great deal to me, and I wanted to thank you.” Loki says tactfully.

“I was an arrogant ignorant fool, spoiled and prideful. I cannot begin to express my deepest regrets for my treatment of your people, especially now when it is so late and means so little. I have wronged you and would like to make amends but I am at a loss as to where I should begin.” Thor says.

“Well, as you may or may not have noticed Midgard is a magic barren wasteland. Casting spells here is next to impossible. Even if you plan on helping me as you say, your time as King of Asgard may still be decades away and I will be here waiting until that day comes when the Casket is finally returned to me. I need to find a way to adapt to this world and I’ll need my magic to do it. These past couple of weeks here at the tower has been wonderful but eventually I’m going to want to go outside and feel the wind on my face. The mortals here would shriek in terror if they laid their eyes upon me. I need to change my appearance and I need to find a way to make this heat more bearable but I can’t do that without magic. Your Mjolnir is the only source close by that can give me the boost I need. Will you help me?” Loki asks.

“Yes of course. What do you need me to do?” Thor asks.

“Let me touch Mjolnir every day. I need only draw off a little from her at a time to practice and experiment with my spells.” Loki asks.

“That is an acceptable request. I will honor it.” Thor says.

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Loki cracks open his spell book, feeling fully charged and ready to try to craft a new spell from scratch. Even though Loki has this book memorized verbatim, it still feels comforting to have something so familiar in front of him. Loki wishes he could have brought his other spell books but that had not been possible at the time. Crafting new spells is a dangerous business. Any manner of things could go wrong and shapeshifting spells are particularly dangerous. His insides could end up on his outsides.

Loki thinks about his illusion casting, shapeshifting, and fireproofing. He needs a spell that combines an element of all three. The illusion spell would change the color of his skin. The shapeshifting spell would change his teeth, eyes, and nails, and remove the ridges from off his skin. The fireproofing spell would make him more tolerable to the heat of this realm. This is going to be hard to figure out.

Loki is by and large a self-taught sorcerer. While he did learn much from the healers of his realm, anything beyond the healing arts was considered a waste of time and so Loki had to expand his horizons on his own. Shapeshifting is a skill that requires a great deal of magical and physical energy. It was a skill Loki had not been able to practice until now. Loki still remembers all the spells he'd been dying to try. Now that he has put on some weight he feels capable of putting forth a full effort. He starts small and decides to focus on his fingernails.

Day One: Fingernails grew to ridiculous length before curling up and breaking off leaving no fingernails. Had to repeat spell with less power to get desired effect. Finger nails are now clear instead of black. Success!

Day Three: Practiced shapeshifting spell to change eye color. Started out too gently and went blind for four days. Eyes remained a solid emerald green color thereafter.

Day Ten: Success! Eyes started out completely white but finally gave over to a dazzling green iris, receiving compliments from many in the house. (Thor seemed to notice most.) Sunglasses no longer necessary.

Day Twelve: After studying human teeth, I gave full power to changing their shape only to have all of them fall out. Protein shake for dinner.

Day Thirteen: Regrew all teeth (horrendously painful!) but they came in looking like human teeth. Success!

Day Fifteen: Moved my spell casting to my room/freezer to practice the fire proofing spell. Bruce at the ready with a fire extinguisher. Freezer completely defrosted at one point, causing a small flood of sorts. Day ended in failure. Too hot to sleep well.

Day Seventeen: Body became overheated and summoned ice in response. A repairman has been called in to fix the damage to the freezer.

Day Eighteen: Success! Bruce sacrificed his eyebrows. So this is what cold feels like? The freezer is no longer an appealing place to sleep. The cooling suit came off today.

Day Nineteen: The illusion spell to change my skin color was the easiest and also the hardest. Many tears shed.

The Birth of a New Avenger

Thor took note of Loki's slow transformation. That first time he let Loki touch Mjolnir he heard his precious hammer hum as if in approval. Mjolnir has never done that before for anyone other than Thor, and lately Mjolnir has not sung for Thor at all, as if she disapproved of his behavior. Since that day when he let Loki touch her, Mjolnir has been singing for Thor again. He did not even know he had been missing it until now.

Thor noticed when Loki's claws changed into normal looking nails and when his blood red eyes turned a solid emerald green. Everyone was frightened when Loki went temporarily blind. That was a long four days for everyone. It was when Loki's eyes turned completely normal, shining with a creamy white background around an emerald center that Thor felt a new feeling stir within him. There were other changes happening to Loki's body that had nothing to do with magic. Loki's overly thin frame was finally filling in. Loki has a naturally lithe figure with high cheekbones and angular lines. Now that the individual spine bumps are no longer visible Loki looks....healthy. He has even taken to joining the team in the gym when he isn't practicing his magic spells. His muscles are slowly gaining definition.

Loki's hair even seems to shine brighter. It is long now, down past his shoulders and appears to have taken on a deeper shade of black, like a starry midnight sky. Natasha has taken to brushing and braiding it in the evenings when they are all curled up in front of the television.

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"Holy shit Lokes. You look....you look amazing. You look human. Wait 'til the others see. They are not going to believe it's you." Tony says appraising Loki's appearance. Loki is now a very beautiful human-looking man.

"Does this shade of skin color suit me? It is very pale. I could go darker." Loki says.

"No, this shade works with your bone structure. I think you nailed it." Tony says. Loki starts sobbing then as he looks in the mirror. Every trace of his Jotunn heritage has been erased. He did not realize this would upset him so. After all this transformation is serving a practical purpose and Loki does need to survive here, but it doesn't remove the overwhelming feeling that Loki has of betraying everything he has suffered for.

"Awe, come on man. Don't cry...uh....um..." Tony pulls Loki in for a man hug and the pasty Jotunn just curls up on Tony's shoulder and bawls.

"Was I so hideous before? Why can't people just accept me as I am? Were my red eyes and blue skin really that gruesome and ugly?" Loki cries. Tony cringes. He doesn't do crying and god knows he's cried enough himself since Loki arrived. He's just not good at this kind of stuff. Shit.

"You know what? I got an idea. There's a movie you need to see. It's called Avatar. It'll be good for you. It'll heal your soul. I promise. We'll watch it together while we stuff ourselves with ice cream." Tony says.

"Is it mint chip?" Loki asks through drying sobs.

"It sure is buddy." Tony says.

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“Oh my god! Loki-you’re hot!” Natasha says as she appraises. She has him twirl for her. “Oooh! Sexy human man!” She coos. Loki blushes bright pink and everyone notices.

“Hey! How come you never say stuff like that to me?” Clint complains.

“What? With that ugly mug? Although.... you do have that bulldog face thing going on, you know-so ugly you’re cute.” Steve says to Clint. Everyone turns to look at Steve with a shocked expression. Tony bursts out laughing.

“Holy shit, Cap made a funny!” Tony giggles.

“He’s been hanging out with you too much.” Clint complains.

“We’re watching Avatar tonight.” Tony announces. Thor comes out of the bathroom then and walks into the living room. No one says anything when Thor walks past Loki not recognizing him in the slightest. He grabs a beer from the bar and plops down on the sofa ready for the evening entertainment. He notices the man standing next to Natasha out of the corner of his eye.

“Oh I see we have a guest. Who is our new...vi...si.....tor?” Thor’s mouth goes slack and hangs agape as his grip on his beer slips, sending it crashing the ground. He stares Loki down from head to toe with a blatant mix of shock and desire written clearly in his features.

“Loki?” Thor asks.

“Well, Thor approves. Let’s watch a movie.” Tony says.

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Natasha spends the entire week dragging Loki all over New York City acting every inch the out-of-town tourist. They go to every major landmark the city has and eat every type of cuisine from every corner of human culture available. Now that Loki is no longer sensitive to the heat he is discovering new food flavors that were not available to him before. He loves spicy food, especially the Asian varieties. People look upon him with desire, not fear or disgust.

Natasha takes Loki shopping for clothes and gets him everything from a nice suit and shoes to several sets of t-shirts, jeans, and silk boxers. She also gets him a nice satiny emerald green robe that matches his eyes. She knows she’s treating him like her personal ken doll, but it’s fun damn it! Loki is fun and after everything he has endured she wants to spoil him rotten. The two get along together thick as thieves.

There is one thing that bothers Loki and that is that throughout their entire time together Natasha is paying for everything. Loki knows he will need to earn his own currency if he is to live on this world. He knows it is time he repaid his friends and earn his keep.

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“I wish I had my own Mjolnir so I wouldn’t have to depend on Thor. If Thor is recalled to Asgard I will have no means of conducting magic on my own. Now that I am on the mend and able to blend in I need to figure out how I am to build a life here. I need....a job. Being a prince is not exactly a skillset and my actual skill sets are fighting with ice weapons and slaying men on the battlefield. I do have skills as a politician, having lived a royal life but I do not think being in the public eye is a wise thing for me to aspire to here.” Loki says to Tony and Bruce as they work in the lab on one of Tony’s projects.

“You’re hired.” Tony says.

“Pardon?” Loki says.

“Loki...Everybody here is on my payroll, even Thor. He’s a prince from a wealthy land but they don’t have American currency there. The guys got have a way to buy muscle t-shirts and schwarma somehow. Bruce, Steve...these guys are superheroes that can’t really live normal lives. You’re the same way. Just stay here. Come to the lab every day like you’ve been doing and work with us. This (Tony gestures to their surroundings) is a legitimate job. You have skills not a lot of other people have and Bruce and I, we love having you here. Besides I think you have what it takes to be an Avenger. That’s the other reason you should stay here.” Tony says. Bruce nods in agreement.

“You should call Nick and have him come and assess Loki.” Bruce says.

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Loki is out on a field full of practice dummies with his friends standing by and watching. The one called Nick has interrogated Loki like he is a criminal but Natasha assures him that it is standard procedure. Nick does not trust anyone easily.

Now that Loki has figured out how to transform his appearance to look human changing back and forth to his natural appearance is easy and only takes seconds instead of nineteen whole days. He has touched Mjolnir and is full charged up with magic and ready for a fight. First on the list is a boxing match with Steve.

“Holy cow. You can really pack a wallop.” Steve says recovering from a punch. He just found a new boxing partner. Nick is impressed. Captain America’s punch is lethal. They then move on to wrestling and again Loki is skilled in this. Being a runt in a land of giants Loki learned early on how to evade the grasp of people much larger and stronger than he. He’s quick.

Thor watches Loki with the others on the sideline. Loki’s long raven hair whips in the wind as he moves with the grace of a ballerina. His movements and muscles have a feminine beauty about them and Thor finds himself confused and befuddled.

“Do you have any swords? I haven’t practice with a blade in ages.” Loki inquires.

“No we don’t use swords down here on earth anymore, but we do have long staffs.” Nick offers.

“That will do. Thor-since you are a prince I know you have been taught the ancient arts of royal combat. Spar with me.” Loki asks. Thor is surprised by Loki’s request but walks over to the wall and grabs a couple of staffs. He tosses one to Loki and then takes a moment to prepare himself. Thor removes his shirt. Staff sparing is always done bare back. The sting of the stick upon the skin helps one learn from their mistakes. Loki quickly braids his hair back and removes his shirt as well. The men circle one another then, appraising each other’s movements.

The staffs knock together for the first time making a loud clacking sound, then again. The two men attack each other full then and what follows is a fast paced heart pounding match that has the team shouting and cheering like fans at a football game. Thor is so much bigger than Loki and everyone delights in how the little guy holds his own against him. It is obvious that Loki’s got some latent aggression towards Thor that has yet to be worked out. There is a fire in his belly and an obvious desire to put the Thunder God on his back and make him cry for mercy. Loki twirls round behind Thor like a gazelle and brings his staff forward resulting in a direct blow to Thor’s face. CRACK! Thor goes down in a heap as his hands fly up to his face to protect his newly broken nose. His eyes squeeze shut with tears of pain. The big golden man is practically in the fetal

position. Thor starts cursing a blue streak at him.

“Damn Jotunn son of a mother whore!” Thor yells in pain. Loki bristles at the insult.

“I am not a whore! I’ll have you know my virtue is still intact Odinson!” Loki yells.

“Loki, Loki calm down. He’s just saying that stuff because he’s in pain. He doesn’t mean it.” Steve says. Bruce helps Thor to his feet as a long string of viscous blood dangles from Thor’s nose above the ground.

“I’ll get a towel.” Tony says. Loki looks at Thor and feels gratified and suddenly the insult doesn’t bother him so much. He even looks at Thor and feels the slightest hint of.....nope definitely not guilt or pity. Loki smiles gleefully.

“Here. Allow me.” Loki says. He places his hand on Thor’s shoulder and chants a healing spell. Thor’s nose makes a crunching sound and Thor grunts but when it is over the nose is fixed. Tony tosses Thor a towel to wipe his face clean and it is as if the broken nose never happened.

“Loki did you just fix his nose?” Clint asks.

“Yes, a simple healing incantation. It was one of the first spells I ever learned.” Loki says. Nick’s one eye goes wide at the seeing the scene play out. Loki’s healing gifts would be a boon for the Avenger’s team providing he had continuous access to either Mjolnir or some other magical object to give him the power he needs.

“Come with me.” Nick orders. Everyone gives Nick a look but say nothing as they follow him silently inside the SHIELD building. They all hop onto an elevator and head down. The elevator goes far deeper underground than any of the team would expect it to go. Their curiosity is peaked.

“Where are we going?” Natasha asks.

“You remember that staff you confiscated after the Chitauri attack?” Nick asks.

“Yeah their king, or general, or whatever the hell he was used that thing to enslave the minds of our people. That thing is dangerous.” Steve says.

“In the wrong hands it is a dangerous weapon, but in the right hands it can be used to protect our world and our people. I also believe it is magical.” Nick says. They enter a caged area and enter through several layers of locked doors before they finally reach what looks like a vault.

“Our people have been afraid of what this thing can do and of it falling into the wrong hands, especially human hands that don’t know how to use it. I’m curious to see what you can do with it.” Nick says. They enter the vault and Nick enters a code into a wall safe. He pulls out a drawer and pulls out the scepter. Loki feels the magical power emanating from it immediately. He licks his lips in anticipation. The power of it is ancient and grand like the tesseract and Mjolnir. Loki will never want for a source of magic so long as he has this.

“A Mjolnir of my very own.” Loki smiles.

MatchMaker

For several weeks under close observation Loki trains with his new toy to learn what it can do and how he can use it. Loki finds that so long as he holds it he has limitless power to cast as many powerful spell as he wants. It will make casting spells in the middle of combat easy. Loki has also found that the scepter can do other things that Loki finds to be unnerving. He could enslave the minds of every person around him if he wanted to, including Thor. The idea of getting close enough to Odin to enslave his mind pops up, and Loki tucks that thought away for another day. He's not going to leap to that just yet, but is an option he might exercise later. Loki wants to avoid using that particular feature of the scepter if he can. He can tell that it not only enslaves the victims but the master as well. Power like that can be addicting. Loki knows he will have to discipline himself to avoid temptation.

After a lot of discussion and deliberation it is decided to let Loki keep it. He knows how to use it and use it wisely and for the greater good. Nick has his own reasons for not wanting the enchanted object to remain in the hands of SHIELD, but he does not share them with the Avengers. Loki puts his new toy inside the safe in Tony's lab at night for safe keeping. Life at the tower takes on comfortable rhythm. The sciences bros spend their days in the lab making new discoveries and blowing each other up, or at least Bruce's eyebrows. Thor continues to help repair the city as Steve, Clint, and Natasha take on missions for SHIELD. It isn't long before Loki is celebrating his six month anniversary of arriving on earth.

The group celebrates with a big meal full of Loki's favorite food while wasting the night away with alcohol and embarrassing stories about one another.

"Hey Loki, there is something that has been bothering me for a while now. You don't have to answer if you don't want to but we are all a little curious and we thought maybe now you might tell us something." Bruce says.

"My life is an open book. I have no secrets." Loki says.

"Yeah well, we've been meaning to ask you.....that day when you broke Thor's nose and he yelled and screamed....you said something to the effect that your virtue is still intact. Are you a virgin?" Tony asks.

"Yes of course." Loki answers. Thor doesn't remember Loki making that statement, probably because he was lying on the ground bleeding from the face at the time.

"Did none of the giantesses of your world strike your fancy? I would think a Prince, even a runt such as you would still garner attention from the ladies." Thor asks.

"Giantesses? Thor in all the years you've encountered Jotunns have you ever once seen a female frost giant?" Loki quizzes.

"Well no, but that is only because I only encountered the males on the battlefield. The females were always hiding in safety somewhere else. I never saw them." Thor says. Loki's jaw drops in disbelief.

"Loki, the night you arrived here I helped you into the bath-you remember? Well, I noticed something about your anatomy and I wondered if that was unique to you or a trademark of your species?" Bruce asks.

“My people are hermaphrodites Dr. Banner, you are correct. There are no such things as giantesses. All Jotunns are both male and female in one. We can both sire and bear children.” Loki explains, giving Thor a pointed look. Thor eyes immediately drop to Loki’s crotch and he stares at it for an uncomfortably awkward amount of time. Loki clears his throat.

“You are a maiden?” Thor asks.

“Yes.” Loki says with his arms folded.

“Excuse me.” Thor says softly before turning and walking to his room.

“What was that about?” Clint asks.

“I think Loki just fried Thor’s brain.” Bruce says.

“I think Thor just realized that every Jotunn he ever killed was also technically a woman. That has to be hard for him to reconcile with his code of honor.” Steve says.

“Whatever. His guilt bores me. If he really wants to make amends he will find a way to get the Casket to me. I’m growing impatient.” Loki says curtly. Only Natasha seems to suspect that Thor is suffering from a different inner turmoil. She smirks at the irony of it all.

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On a quiet Saturday afternoon the balcony lights up with the rainbow of the Bifrost and everyone turns to look. They assume it is going to be Heimdall, but are surprised when they see a beautiful red haired woman standing there.

“Mother!” Thor beams as he rushes outside to scoop Frigga up into his arms. He leads her inside and introduces her to his friends. “Mother this is Bruce, Anthony, Steven, Loki, Natasha, and Clint. Everyone this is my Mother, Queen Frigga of Asgard.”

“It’s a pleasure to meet you your Highness.” Steve says. Everyone nods in agreement.

“What brings you to Midgard?” Thor asks sounding a little concerned. Her visit is a little unorthodox.

“Does a mother need an ulterior reason to visit her son?” Frigga asks. Thor gives her a doubtful look. “You know me too well my son. I have come to speak with you on a matter of business and it is rather serious. We’ll need tea.”

“I’ll get it.” Bruce offers as he skips off to the kitchen.

“This sounds like a private conversation. We’ll take our leave.” Steve says.

“No. Stay. You are Thor’s friends and he’ll only end up explaining all of this to you later, so you may as well stay and hear it all now. Thor your father’s health is in decline.” Frigga begins. Loki’s ears perk up immediately.

“The topic of your coronation has been broached along with the selection of your queen. The council has been putting forth the names of various ladies as contenders for your marriage bed but all the front runners have suffered some mishap or another.” Frigga says. Bruce comes out of the kitchen with a couple mugs of fresh hot tea and places them in front of Thor and Frigga.

“Thank you dear.” Frigga smiles at Bruce.

“Mishaps? What kind of mishaps?” Thor says making a face.

“Oh well for starters the favorite, Lady Sigyn is with child by one of the palace guards. It was quite the scandal. In fact many of the ladies at court have been disqualified due to very public dalliances. Faking the stain at the bedding ceremony is impossible when everyone knows you are no longer a virgin.” Frigga says as she sips her tea. Everyone is listening and amazed by what they are hearing.

“Then there are the foreigners that have been offered up in political alliance. Two of them got tired of waiting and are already married off to other suitors, one is far too young and the other is rumored to not feel attraction to men at all. One of the councilmen had even put Sif’s name forward not knowing she is of that mindset as well. Honestly, I’m beginning to think that there are not any virgins of noble blood left in the nine realms. Even if they are virgins that alone does not mean they are qualified to be Queen. Finding the right girl with all the necessary qualifications is going to be a daunting task.” Frigga complains.

“Don’t worry mother, I’m sure father will round up the ladies that are left and put chastity belts on them.” Thor scowls.

“Excuse me ma’am, I’m sorry to interrupt but is Thor’s bride being a virgin really that big a deal?” Tony asks.

“Yes. Thor’s marriage is a matter of state as is his wedding night which will be witnessed by foreign dignitaries. We had hoped to have you married before the coronation but considering your father’s health it will mostly likely come after when you are king.” Frigga says.

“How long do I have before the coronation happens?” Thor asks.

“A few months at least. Your father is still not ready to release the reins just yet though I am slowly wearing him down. The reason I came to tell you all of this now is because I wanted to know if you had anyone specific in mind to be your future queen?” Frigga asks.

“I...um....can’t think of anyone.” Thor stutters.

“Well at least your father will stop complaining about the dowry. I swear Thor, your father grows stranger with age. He’ll spend half the treasury on a lavish feast commemorating his grandfather’s victory in some old battle but he balks at paying a bridal dowry for your future wife. The things he chooses to be cheap about always surprise me. Sometimes I think the man would sooner part with one of the items in the weapons vault than pay a single gold coin to a bridal family.” Frigga laments. She and Thor spend the next hour catching up on other goings on in Asgard and finally Frigga rises to take her leave. Everyone found her visit to be very informative and everyone has a much clearer picture of Asgard’s culture, society, and politics. As Frigga turns to leave she mentions on last thing.

“Oh and Thor, I took the liberty of replenishing your personal account with my own funds. You were getting a little low.” Frigga says shooting a pointed gaze at Loki and a warm smile. “If anyone comes to mind Thor, anyone at all, just tell Heimdall and he’ll let me know. Your time left here on Midgard is limited.”

Frigga's Apprentice

Loki flees to his room to avoid embarrassment. Thor's mother was so obvious in her intentions that a child would have picked up on her little hints. No wonder she wanted everyone to linger and hear her conversation with Thor. The entire thing was for Loki's benefit. He feels like he is on the verge of tears and he is not even sure why. He needs to think this out.

Thor turns searching for Loki's face behind him only to find him absent. Thor would never consider himself a brilliant scholar but even he couldn't miss the hints his mother was dropping. Thor almost blurted out Loki's name when Frigga asked him if he had anyone in mind. He didn't but for the one obvious glaring reason. Loki still hates him. The fact that he has fled the room only confirms Thor's suspicions. Loki wants nothing to do with his mother's matchmaking. Moreover, does he? Loki is a Jotunn. Their children would be Jotunn hybrids that would in all likelihood inherit some if not all of Loki's natural features. Could he love his children if they looked like that? Thor is not sure. It doesn't matter. Loki would never be interested in such a match.

Natasha knocks on Loki's door and waits for a moment before entering. Loki is sitting in a lounge chair looking out the window. She can tell he is having an inner dialogue full of argument.

"Care to talk about it?" Natasha asks.

"Thor's mother is a lunatic! She's brilliant but she's a lunatic. Even if Thor were interested in me, which he will never be, how could I allow myself to lay with that man? He's murdered untold scores of my people and tried to bash my head in the first time he met me. If I even so much as flirt with the man I might as well return home right now, go to the public shaming square and declare myself a blood traitor to my people!" Loki cries.

"You would not be a traitor Loki. You would be a responsible pragmatic Prince acting in the best interests of the people you have left. You would be doing it to save your species. Political marriages have been made for far less noble reasons than that."

"Yes, and I'll spend the rest of my life on my knees sucking the King of Asgard's cock like a good little Jotunn." Loki hisses.

"You say that like it would be a bad thing." Natasha grins. Loki glares at her aghast by her remark.

"Oh come on Loki I've seen the way you look at Thor, especially when he takes his shirt off in the gym. Don't pretend you haven't thought about it." Natasha adds.

"I...wh....I most certainly have not!" Loki lies blushing a scarlet rose.

"Liar. A girl would have to be dead below the waist to not think about all that muscle in the middle of the night." Natasha says with her eyes hooded.

"Have you been thinking about Thor like that?" Loki says with an edge of jealousy to his tone.

"Hell yes I have!" She says.

"Tasha! You ...you can't think of him like that!" Loki whines.

“Why, ‘cause it makes you jealous...’cause you’re into him?” Natasha quieres.

“NO! I am NOT jealous!” Loki says as he folds his arms and crosses his legs in a pouty childish manner reminiscent of a thirteen year old girl. Natasha quirks her eyebrow at him and gestures to his body language. Loki huffs at her in annoyance.

“So Thor is nice to look at. That is lust not love, and you are forgetting that Thor finds me repulsive.”

“I wouldn’t be so sure about that. He’s been ogling you ever since you changed your appearance.” Natasha says.

“This outer shell is a lie. The fact that he finds it attractive means nothing to me.” Loki says.

“The fact that he is attracted to you at all is promising. He used to think of you as nothing more than a creature that needed to be exterminated, remember?” Natasha pushes.

“How could I forget? I have lost much in my life, and endured a great many horrors. I’ll not sacrifice my last shred of dignity by throwing myself at that man.” Loki says.

“What if he courted you?” Natasha asks.

“Thor would never do that. He hates me.” Loki says.

“I didn’t hear a no in there.” Natasha says with a smile.

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“We need to talk.” Natasha says as she grabs Thor’s arm and drags him back to his bedroom.

“Yes Lady Natasha. What is it?” Thor says politely.

“How do you feel about Loki?” She puts it to him bluntly. Thor’s eyes go wide and he fumbles for a politically correct answer.

“I’m in awe of Loki and his strength and endurance in the face of all he has overcome to include my own hatred and ignorance.” Thor says eloquently.

“Cut the bullshit Thor. We all heard your mother. Now is Loki a contender to be your queen or not?”

“Why? Is he interested?” Thor asks with a lilt in his voice.

“Do you like him in that way or not?” Natasha says like she is talking to a two year old.

“I...he’s surprising... and honest. Never in all my life has anyone opened my eyes like he has. I’ve been surrounded by sycophants for so long I could not recognize them for what they were. Loki made me see the ugliest parts of myself and he changed me. He is beautiful to me.” Thor finally puts together the words he wants to say.

“And half-breed Jotunn children? Would that bother you?” Natasha asks pointedly.

“I have thought about that a great deal and realized that I would love my children no matter what their appearance might be.”

“What about Loki’s man candy? Does the fact that Loki also has a penis bother you?” Natasha asks.

“No.” Thor says lightly. That response surprises Natasha and she can’t help but give Thor a queer look.

“What about Loki’s natural appearance? You seemed to only notice Loki when he made himself look like the rest of us.” Natasha asks.

“I am ashamed to say that I do prefer Loki’s new appearance to his natural one.” Thor confesses.

“Is Asgard’s climate like earth’s or would Loki be able to walk around in his normal skin if he lived there?”

“Asgard is much like Midgard. Loki would have to continue wearing his new skin if he chose to live there.” Thor explains.

“The point isn’t completely moot, but either way Loki will be stuck looking like us for the foreseeable future in any case.” Natasha says.

“Yes that is true.” Thor says. “Lady Natasha, has Loki expressed an interest in courtship?” Thor asks.

“Loki is weighing the option. He fears you’ll rebuff him or make him debase himself all just to save his people. He fears that you do not respect him.” Natasha says.

“I hold him in the highest regard.” Thor says seriously.

“Are you willing to humiliate yourself to win his affections, because I think that is what this is going to take.” Natasha asks.

“Is Loki only interested because he wants to save his people or does he feel something for me?” Thor asks.

“Oh, he’s into you. He just doesn’t know it yet.”

A Conversation in the Dark

It is just after 11pm when Loki comes padding out of his room in his green satin evening robe to get a late night snack. He hid in his room during dinner to avoid Thor and frankly everyone else. It is funny, but even in his new heat resistant form he still enjoys pizza cold. Loki closes the fridge door to find Thor standing there staring at him.

The first thing Thor notices about Loki is his wrists. They are small and delicate. The sleek fabric of his attire is feminine and hugs Loki in a sensual manner. Loki's long black hair is flowing freely around his shoulders, and the look in his eye is that of a doe caught grazing by a hunter. Thor has spent the past few months avoiding engaging with Loki directly whether it be in conversation, in the gym, or other circumstances. Many times have they been in the same room together, usually in a group with the others, and even participated in the same conversations; but they rarely addressed each other directly. Thor has learned much about Loki through observation and has come to admire Loki very deeply. It is because of Loki that Thor has become a wiser man. Loki would be good for him. Loki would not be afraid to question Thor's judgment.

Loki has watched Thor's demeanor change drastically these past few months. Quietly observing the man Loki has noticed that Thor does possess a very large and gentle heart (for those that are in his good graces). Natasha and the others have even commented on Thor's new found humility and less arrogant attitude. Being on the other side of the looking glass has been an adjustment for Loki. Thor has been an evil villain to Loki the whole of his life. Seeing the side of him that is so beloved by so many, Loki has had a hard time reconciling the two. And yet, this side, the loving golden god bound by honor, loyalty, and fidelity is attractive to Loki. The part of Thor that is not an arrogant, bigoted, racist fool is beautiful.

"Hello." Thor says pensively.

"Hi." Loki returns as he puts his food down on the counter.

"I...um...came to get a glass of water." Thor says.

"Oh, well...um...let me get out of your way." Loki says.

"No! I mean...you're not in the way." Thor walks over and quietly gets out a glass and fills it with water from the tap. He lingers for a moment, feeling awkward. "Loki?"

"Yes Thor?"

"Do you forgive me?" Thor asks.

"I...I don't know Thor." Loki says honestly. Thor nods. "Thor?"

"Yes Loki."

"Do you think I'm ugly? I mean...my natural form. Do I repulse you?" Loki asks.

"Not anymore. Now that I see you as a person your natural form is not so frightening." Thor says afraid of hurting Loki's feelings.

"But you prefer this form yes?" Loki asks.

"I do. Do you hate me for that?" Thor asks.

“No. No that is an honest answer.” Loki says. “Thor?”

“Yes Loki.”

“Why do you want me?” Loki asks.

“You made me a better man.” Thor says. “Why do you want me?”

“You let yourself be changed.” Loki says. “Thor?”

“Yes Loki.”

“If I decide I don’t want this, will you still help my people?” Loki asks.

“You have my word Loki.” Thor says. “May I call upon you in the morning?”

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“Yes.”

“Goodnight Loki.”

“Goodnight Thor.”

Breakfast at Loki's

Thor awakens early the next morning and makes a run down to a nearby market to pick up fresh flowers, fish, caviar, a baguette, brie, grapes, and orange juice. He assembles Loki's breakfast to be ready at the time when Loki usually arises.

"Well, well, what's all this?" Bruce asks as he turns on the coffee pot. Tony and Natasha come lumbering in looking for a caffeine fix. Thor blushes at the sudden attention.

"I made breakfast for Loki." Thor says quietly like an embarrassed fourteen year old.

"Nice." Natasha says looking at the spread.

"Sooooooo aaaaah are you two.....?" Tony gestures with his hands.

"Courting? Yes. Loki and I had a heartfelt and honest discussion last night and we've decided we'd like to try being together." Thor says feeling blood rush his cheeks.

"So how do aliens date one another?" Tony asks.

"In Asgard we would normally be chaperoned at all times to ensure modesty and to protect the lady's good name and reputation." Thor says.

"Sounds like a fucking drag." Tony mutters.

"Pre-martial relations are most definitely not allowed." Thor says very seriously.

"How do Jotunns court each other?" Natasha asks.

"I don't know." Thor says in wonder. He has absolutely no idea and it didn't even occur to him that Loki might have his own customs that he is expected to follow. "I will have to make an inquiry." Thor states as he picks up the tray of food. "Jarvis, pray tell me where Loki is. Is he still in bed?" Thor asks.

"His highness is still in bed though his breathing pattern would suggest he is awakening."

"Thank you." Thor says as he picks up the tray to take to Loki's room. As soon as he is gone the others grin widely at each other.

"Oh my god this is going to be so much fun to watch!" Tony says high pitched and excited like a high school teenaged girl. Natasha and Bruce snicker at his exuberance.

A knock at the door comes making Loki open his eyes. "Yes? Who is it?" Loki asks.

"It's me, I've brought breakfast." Thor says through the door.

"Enter." Loki bids. The knob turns and the door opens to a smiling golden god holding a tray of food with a red rose on it.

"Good morning." Thor says with a bright smile.

"Mmmm. Breakfast in bed. You do know how to sweep a girl off her feet." Loki sits up and Thor puts the tray down on Loki's awaiting lap before walking round to the other side of the bed to sit gently beside him. "Are you just going to sit there and watch me eat?" Loki asks with a

quirked brow.

“Yes. Is it good? Do you like it?” Thor asks.

“You know it is and you know I do.” Loki says as he smears a big glob of caviar onto a thinly sliced crust of bread.

“It occurred to me this morning that I know nothing of your customs. How is courting done among your people?” Thor asks. Loki chews his food slowly as he considers what to say. A Jotunn’s male parts are always fertile, but when a Jotunn goes into heat the female parts become active and then everyone that wants to breed with that Jotunn has to bash each other’s heads in for the right. Bonded pairs sometimes try to ensure there aren’t any others around to make a challenge but on Jotunnheim it is not uncommon for a bonded pair to have many children that are all half siblings. Monogamy is a practice observed mostly by the ruling class for purposes of succession. Loki thinks up a lie quickly.

“Well, gifts are given. Usually animal pelts, leather and the like. Though as the courtship progresses there are tasks that must be performed by the interested party to prove their resolve and commitment to their intended.” Loki tries not to smile too mischievously. He is lying through his teeth.

“Oh? What sort of tasks?” Thor asks.

“Well, on my world, before the large animals started dying off our warriors would ride bareback on a wooly snowsnipe in a display of strength. I am told that Asgard’s bilgesnipe are of comparable size and ferocity. Is that true?” Loki asks. He knows damn well bilgesnipe are twice as big.

“Ah, yes I believe so.” Thor says trying to hide his ignorance and fear. Even the God of Thunder has a healthy respect for those horrid fearsome creatures.

“Perhaps, if we visit Asgard you can display your strength for me, since you will be playing the role of the dominant partner in our marriage, I need to know you have what it takes to give me strong offspring.” Loki says. That statement makes Thor smile.

“It would be my honor to prove my virility to you.” Thor says. Oh this is too easy.

“And then there is the traditional consummation quilt we must make and embroider with the symbols of both our houses woven into the center of the fabric showing our unification as a bonded pair.” Loki says.

“Embroidery, quilt making?” Thor asks. He’s had to stitch up a few wounds in his life but he’s never sewn a garment together before. That’s women’s work.

“You do know how to sew don’t you?” Loki asks using all his will power not to cackle and howl in laughter at Thor’s expense.

“Ah, yes of course.” Thor lies and Loki knows it. Oh this is going to be fun!

“Excellent. I’ll get started on the quilt and when my half is done I’ll present it to you to finish.” Loki says lightly as he finishes his meal. “Thank you Thor, that was delightful. What are we doing the rest of the day today?” Loki asks.

“I thought we could go for a walk in the park.” Thor says as he removes the tray.

“I think that would be lovely.” Loki says. “I’ll just hop into the shower and get ready.”

“I’ll see you in a little bit.” Thor smiles as he closes the door behind him.

“And if you do all those ridiculous things for me I’ll suck your cock at the bedding ceremony.” Loki mutters with a naughty smile.

Stitch and Rip

Loki and Natasha go shopping for fabric and other quilting supplies and then spend the entire day measuring, cutting, and stitching the basic backing. Loki is taking pity on Thor doing the entire base blanket and then his half of the top embroidered section. The embroidered section, which will bear half of his family's crest, takes days to complete and then stitch onto the base quilt. Thor breaks out into a cold sweat when Loki presents him with it. It is so beautifully detailed and exquisitely stitched. In the center there is a serpent coiling and wrapping around an icicle. Thor looks at it and just knows he's going to fuck it up.

"You honor me Loki. I will complete this with the utmost care." He says seriously.

"Natasha has the quilting and embroidery supplies." Loki says.

"Thank you." Thor says trying not to look too frightened. Later that afternoon he pulls Natasha to the side.

"My lady you must help me! I do not know how to sew and I fear I may dole out great insult to Loki if I fail in this task." Thor says.

"I only know some basics. I helped Loki a little holding the fabric to help him cut it and stuff. I don't think he would begrudge you having help with this. The embroidery portion I'm not so familiar with and that is mostly what you'll have to do. I don't know how helpful I'll be but I will try." She says.

"I thank you." Thor says.

Natasha watches as Thor tries to thread a needle and can't contain her laughter. His thick fingers and warrior gaze look upon the eye of the needle as though it was a fearsome foe, and he's losing the battle against it. Thor huffs in anger.

"This is ridiculous! It is an impossible task. How any clothing is formed by anyone is a miracle worthy of a wergild!" Thor growls. Natasha chuckles at his expense. Steve walks in with an amused look on his face and takes pity on the giant thunderer.

"Here let me help." Steve says as he takes the needle and thread from Thor. "It helps if you get the tip a little wet." Steve says as he threads the eye and then pulls it through and then ties the knot to secure it. Thor looks at Steve like he is a god. "What embroidery design are you going to do for the center?" Steve asks.

"I'm supposed to do half of my family crest and join it with Loki's in the center here." Thor says. Steve gives a low whistle. That would be a difficult thing for an experienced quilter to do, let alone someone like Thor. He's screwed.

"Well ah...you should probably start out by drawing a pattern of your family crest." Steve says. He walks over to the desk and grabs a piece of paper and a pencil. "Here, draw me a picture of your crest and I'll help you make an embroidery template." Steve says. Steve is a naturally gifted artist, so when Thor renders a blob and stick figure lion Steve cringes. "What is that supposed to be?" Steve asks pointing to the blob.

"A shield with this design carved onto the front." Thor says.

"Ah huh. And ah, this?" Steve points to the stick figure with fire hair.

“A lion.” Thor says.

“Ah huh. What are these squiggly marks here?” Steve asks.

“Those are sort of leaf like decorations around the shield.” Thor says.

“Ah huh. Do you mind if I try to recreate this?” Steve asks sounding horrified.

“Please my friend. I will forever be in your debt.” Thor says sounding desperate. Steve grabs another piece of paper and takes a crack at interpreting what Thor’s family crest is supposed to look like. A couple of minutes later Steve presents Thor with the drawing and Thor gasps. It is perfect. With a few tiny details that are missing Steve has recreated his family crest perfectly.

“My friend you are incredibly talented.” Thor says admiring Steve’s art. Tony walks in and spies on what they are doing. He looks the quilt over and then over at both Thor’s and Steve’s drawings. He gives a low whistle.

“That thing is amazing. You’re screwed.” Tony says out loud what Steve was thinking moments before.

“Thank you Anthony for that vote of confidence.” Thor draws.

“Hey look man, I’ve got an idea. Why don’t we have Steve draw up a full sized version for your quilt, scan it, print it on fabric, and then iron that shit on with glue. And then it will be like paint by numbers. You can just stitch in matching thread over the printed fabric and the whole thing will look hand made. No one will ever know the difference.” Tony says.

“Hey that would work!” Steve says with a smile.

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There is fire everywhere. The Fire Giants of Muspleheim have found a passage to Midgard and are using it to attack a small town not 2 hours drive from New York City. The wheat field burns as Thor calls the rain to put the fire out. It helps a great deal, but the demons are still hurling large fire balls at the Avengers. Even the Hulks fears fire. Loki uses his magic to encase the group in a protective dome of magic. It saves them, but they aren’t a very effective fighting force while hiding in it.

“Thor can you bring down more rain? It seems to be the only thing slowing them down.” Tony asks.

“Snow would be better.” Steve adds.

“I have never summoned snow before. I do not know if I can.” Thor says.

“Perhaps I can help.” Loki offers. Loki touches Thor’s arm and feels out Thor’s power. Summoning snow does not come natural to Thor and teaching him how to augment his natural gift would take too long. “Forgive me Thor, but I’m going to have to take control for a moment.” Loki says as he taps the scepter to Thor’s chest and takes control of Thor’s mind. Thor’s eyes glow a brighter shade of blue but take on a zombified glaze. Loki keeps his hand on Thor’s arm and closes his eyes to concentrate. Thor raises his other arm with Mjolnir and calls on the lightening. Loki’s skin turns blue and the air chills quickly. The clouds roll fast and frightening in the sky as the first snowflakes fall. The fire giants hiss in discomfort as the temperature drops. Steve shivers as he has flashbacks of the ice. The sky opens up and drops a blizzard around them. The fire giants squeal and roar as the snow causes them to freeze in place; their molten bodies cooled and stiffen.

Natasha, Clint, and Steve all huddle for warmth as the storm swirls around their bubble. When the last fire giant freezes solid the air dies down and the storm dissipates.

The group was too worried with their surroundings to notice the tears that were falling from Loki's eyes. Thor's mind was wide open to him and he couldn't resist poking around to see what he could find. He wishes he hadn't. Too many memories of Thor slaying his kin flooded his mind and Loki is once again reminded of Thor's crimes. Something else becomes obvious also. Thor's memories of Odin show Loki the profile of a man that would never relinquish the Casket to him, despite the assurances of Queen Frigga. The only way Loki will get it back is when Thor is king and Odin can no longer overrule his son's wishes. The culture of Asgard is so different from that of his people and the bigotry Thor felt for Jotunns is pervasive throughout Aesir society. Despite Thor's promises Loki can tell the only way he'll get what he wants is by marrying Thor after he is crowned king and no one can naysay the union. Frigga understood this. No wonder the woman is pressuring Odin to retire so soon.

Loki taps the scepter to Thor's chest again to free the man of his control. As Thor's mind comes back to consciousness he looks at Loki with regret and sadness. Thor was able to see Loki's memories as well. A connection was made and once again the pair is reminded of all the harmful history between them, but also of new feelings and desires. Thor is more certain than ever that Loki is his ideal queen. Loki is more certain than ever that the past is a hurdle they cannot overcome. The pain is too much.

The group strikes down the frozen fire giants, leaving a frozen scorched field behind them. They head home riding back to the tower in silence. Everyone notices the subdued vibe Thor and Loki are giving off. Something about happened between them, though no one knows what. When they get back to the tower Thor and Loki seclude themselves from the others to have a private talk.

"Tell me what you are thinking." Thor says.

"You asked me if I forgive you for your past transgressions. I don't think I can. For my people, for my soul, I don't think I can." Loki says. Thor gets on bended knee before Loki.

"I have done much wrong to you and yours. I will spend the rest of my life paying recompense for all of it. Please do not give up on me now. Tell me how I might make amends." Thor begs.

"I don't know if that is possible." Loki says.

"I will find a way, please give me time." Thor begs again. A long moment of silence follows that spans and eternity before Loki speaks again.

"Make amends if you can." Loki says.

In His Element

Thor makes courting Loki a full time job. Thanks to Steve, Tony, and Natasha Thor has made a huge leap ahead on the consummation quilt and is spending hours every day carefully stitching in all the different colored threads in the places they are supposed to go. Loki managed to do this in only a matter of days using his magic to do all the tedious labor for him, not that Thor will ever know that. Thor has pricked his fingers more times than he cares to count and now has band aides on the tips of every finger. Natasha took pity on him and showed him how handy a thimble can be.

In the evenings Thor takes Loki out into the city to see all the beautiful and strange sites of the human world. Tonight Thor is taking Loki to an art gallery at Steve's suggestion. The men are dressed nicely in black slacks and dress shirts. Thor wears a long burgundy blazer with the collar popped. His hair is combed back in a neat man bun and he is carrying Mjolnir around with him concealed in a large leather satchel strung across his shoulder. Loki's long hair is stick straight and flowing freely. The emerald print silk scarf about his neck matches his green shirt and black blazer. He looks elegant. The pair gets many looks from many women as they pass. When it becomes obvious they are a couple they then get many looks from certain men, envious ones.

Thor places his hand instinctively on the small of Loki's back, feeling both protective and possessive. Loki has been more withdrawn from Thor since the fire giant incident and Thor has doubled down his efforts ever since. Thor knows more about Loki and his people now from that one moment of mind sharing with the scepter. He did not know that Jotunns love vibrant colors, but it makes sense. Their world's landscape consists mostly of whites, blues, and greys. Green, red, purple, yellow, and pink are very rare and highly prized. Loki lingers the longest in front of paintings with these colors.

Thor also did not know that Jotunns bathe by completely covering their bodies in a layer of ice and letting their outer most layer of skin stick to it before melting it all off. It only takes them a few seconds to do. Taking a shower must feel cumbersome by comparison. He also learned of Jotunn mating cycles and of the heat. It occurs to Thor that if Loki goes into heat before the wedding he will have his hands full protecting Loki's virtue from others and himself. He prays that such a complication does not arise.

Thor also learned from his connection with Loki that the quilt and the bilgesnipe riding are just little lies of his that he made at Thor's expense and for his own amusement. Thor is not angry, in fact he keeps quiet that he knows, silently sharing in the joke. Thor is more determined than ever to ride the biggest bilgesnipe he can find.

"This woman is crying." Loki says looking at a strange drawing of a blue woman. It speaks to his heart and a tear escapes down his cheek. Loki feels Thor's palm caress him then, his calloused thumb wipes the tear away. Thor pulls Loki close to him and kisses his temple. It is sweet and erotic and the scant air between them grows thick and heavy.

"My darling with the fragile heart, I shall hold you and keep you that you may never know pain again." Thor says softly into Loki's hair. "We will rebuild Jotunnheim together. You will be King of one realm and Queen of another. Our children will unify our peoples." Thor pledges.

"What if your father gets wind of this courtship? If he finds out about us before you are crowned King he'll wed you off to another." Loki says. He is concerned about this because he needs the Casket and a bridal dowry is the only logical reason Thor would gift it to him. Thor's

people and council would balk if their new young king gave away the Casket freely and without negotiation or exchange. He would appear foolish and weak and the Asgardians would question his judgment. Loki's people cannot survive on Thor's charity forever.

"Fret not my love, my mother and our gatekeeper are keeping track of these things. I will not marry another. My father can condemn me to the dungeons if need be, but I will not wed another." Thor says. Loki feels a wave of guilt then. Guilt for leading Thor on and then for not leading Thor on. Loki feels torn in half about Thor. They are attracted to one another that much is obvious, but Loki feels guilt at falling so readily into Thor's arms. He wants to open his heart to Thor. He wants to be happy. He also wants to hate Thor and slay him in his sleep, but what good would that do? He needs Thor to give him the Casket and to do that they must marry. Loki lays his head on Thor's chest and says nothing.

The weather has turned quickly this past week in New York. The leaves are falling off the trees and the air is quite chilled. Loki loves it. They walk the busy streets in the dark breathing in the evening air as the smell of pizza and Chinese food wafts around them. They hop into a cab and head to a location that Loki has never been to before. The air is finally cold enough for the skating rink to open. Thor rents two pairs of skates but Loki looks at the shoes quizzically as if they are the most ridiculous things ever invented. Why wouldn't he just walk on the ice in his bare feet? They were made for this. Just then a pair of skaters go whizzing past him twirling and gliding in graceful movements. The bottoms of Loki's feet are specifically designed to prevent slipping and gliding. He supposes it is for the best. People would wonder about him if he went out there without them anyway.

The skates are awkward to say the least but when Loki steps out onto the ice he feels like he is home. He builds up to a sprint quickly and proceeds to put all other skaters in the rink to shame. Loki's natural grace is compounded tenfold as he does a triple lutz, back flip, and triple axel with power and ease. People applaud him, Thor most of all. The people gathered to watch him think he is a professional. When he finally tires and retreats to a bench, Loki is all smiles and Thor is the one that put it there. They grab another cab and ride back to the tower. Loki curls up into Thor and purrs in contentment. Here in this time and place he can forget all he's endured and all that faces him still. This moment is perfect and he is letting himself enjoy it.

They ride the elevator up and get off on their floor. Thor walks Loki to his bedroom door and smiles at him.

"I had a really good time tonight." Loki says.

The First Thanksgiving

“What does this holiday commemorate?” Loki asks.

“Ah...one really good moment between two peoples. The rest was war, devastation, and hell....kinda like you and Thor.” Tony says.

“Ignore him. It’s called Thanksgiving. It’s a feast essentially and a time for friends and family to gather and think about the things they are thankful for.” Steve says.

“And that large bird carcass is traditional?” Loki asks.

“It’s not Thanksgiving without a big overcooked dried out turkey drowning in lumpy gravy.” Clint says.

“Oh no, my bird will be cooked to perfection and my gravy will be lump free and I know that because Eduardo my chef is making it.” Tony says.

“Tony, give that man a day off! We can cook the meal ourselves. That’s kind of the point!” Steve says sounding disappointed.

“But I want the food to taste good.” Tony says. Steve puts his hands on his hips and scowls at Tony, clearly offended.

“I can cook. I actually learned how unlike some people.” Steve says.

“Hey, if you want to take charge of cooking our dinner go for it Spangles. Just don’t screw up the pumpkin pie.” Tony says.

“I won’t.” Steve says.

“We’ll all pitch in. I’ll make green bean casserole.” Clint offers.

“I am familiar with the roasting of large beasts. I will render assistance as well.” Thor says.

“I would love to learn how to do these things. Cooking is not something we really do on my world. Most of our foods were eaten raw, pickled, aged, or dried.” Loki says.

“Alright then. If we are going to do this ourselves we should do some prep work today so tomorrow is not so hectic.” Bruce says. Steve starts in by cutting and gutting the sugar pumpkins so that they may be roasted for pie. Bruce pulls the thawed turkey out of its packaging and removes the giblet pouch and prepares a brine to flavor and moisten the bird. The group hangs out in the kitchen talking and reminiscing about past Thanksgivings and other holidays. Loki’s face fills with melancholy and Thor sees it. He pulls Loki into his embrace and rocks him a bit.

“What food would you like to have at this great feast?” Thor asks.

“Pickled fish, so that I might remember my people.” Loki says quietly.

“I’ll go get if for you darling.” Thor kisses his hair again. They have yet to have a true kiss. Thor longs for it so, but he knows Loki needs patience and time. Bruce gives Thor directions to an awesome local Jewish deli that makes a killer pickled herring dish. Thor buys enough to feed a dozen people knowing Loki will probably consume it all himself over the course of several days.

The following day is Thanksgiving and everyone converges on the kitchen to put forth a meal to remember. Though the kitchen is large it is crowded as many butts shimmy and rub up against one another in a bid to pass without tripping or knocking over people or things. It is a funny amiable intimacy filled with warmth and joy. Thor's eyes rake over Loki openly and he positions his body behind him as Loki chops vegetables on the cutting board. Thor places his hands lightly over Loki's as he makes the cuts, smelling his scent, pressing his chest to Loki's back. Thor's hands are so calloused and rough and their texture makes Loki's skin feel alive. Loki relaxes against him. He's so warm, strong, and feral. Loki closes his eyes and lets Thor take control of the knife, the pressure, the movement. Loki can smell Thor, feel his heavy desperate breath. His own becomes jagged and short. Loki feels his urgency building, but then it stops suddenly. The vegetables are all chopped.

"Christ if the salad dressing is half as good as those vegetables, I'll go full vegan." Tony says. Loki opens his eyes. Everyone is staring at them and he blushes bright pink. Thor smiles shyly, but mostly because his arousal is hiding, pressed against Loki's backside. He desires.

After the potatoes have been whipped, the rolls burned, and the turkey roasted to perfection dinner is served. The smell of food perfumes the tower and the wine flows freely. Moans of pleasure hum through the air as everyone consumes their meal. Of course Steve is the one to bring up the meaning of the holiday and the first to state what he is thankful for.

"I'm thankful for friends, familiarity, and the internet. The internet is really really amazing." Steve says with a big grin.

"I'm thankful for acceptance and the new freedom that comes from that." Bruce says. "I never knew what a blessing and a freedom it was to live an ordinary life until I couldn't." It is a sentiment shared by many at the table.

"I'm grateful for minimal losses." Natasha says, thinking of the Chitauri invasion, and the fire giant invasion.

"I'm grateful for harsh lessons, strong people, and the wisdom of true friends." Thor smiles at Loki gently.

"I'm grateful to be alive, and to all of you. I would not be here were it not for your generosity and kindness." Loki says. Everyone is feeling weepy by now and the whole room is about to burst into tears.

"I'm grateful for porn." Tony says crassly.

"Jesus Tony!" Clint rolls his eyes and chuckles.

"Loki and Thor could put on a show for us. That preview in the kitchen was steamy enough." Tony wiggles his eyes at the couple.

"Nay Anthony, not until our wedding night." Thor says.

"Which is a public event according to your mom. Can I watch?" Tony asks. Loki goes white a sheet then. He'd forgotten about that particular detail.

"Thor, what exactly happens at the bedding ceremony? Is it just a few people or will we be on display before the entire kingdom?" Loki asks nervously. Thor sighs heavily. He is not looking forward to the event. It is one he has known his entire life that he will have to endure.

"We will be in a large bedchamber in a bed with sheer curtains. The curtains will help

blind our view of who will be watching but they will be able to see everything. The witnesses will be various members of the royal council, foreign dignitaries, and some select noblemen, roughly 50 people. We will be afforded long dressing gowns when we enter the chamber and climb into bed. I will remove mine. The bride usually keeps hers on to protect her modesty. When the deed is done the sheet is taken and the blood mark of the bride's virtue is displayed on the balcony for the kingdom to see. After that the people take their leave and I and my bride will be left alone for a fortnight to enjoy our honeymoon in solitude. Only one select servant will be granted access to our chambers to see to our needs." Thor explains as his face gets redder by the minute. Everyone looks horrified as they turn their eyes to Loki. To their surprise, Loki seems unphased by Thor's description.

"That is acceptable. Your version of public sex is tamer than that of my people. I think I will prefer it." Loki says as he avoids explaining the mating customs of his species. When the heat strikes Jotunns in the near vicinity tend to go a little mad from the smell of the pheromones. When a really desirable Jotunn is fought over by many strong suitors it is not uncommon for the victor to fuck his prize in front of the others. When members of the ruling class go into heat they are locked up in a prison cell to keep others away. Loki hasn't had his first heat yet. He is still young.

"His version of pubic sex? What's your version of public sex like?" Tony asks. Of course it is Tony that would ask.

"At the risk of sounding like the wild savage that most people take my species for, my kind are more...feral in the claiming of a breeding vessel. The strongest, most dominant Jotunn wins the right to breed another Jotunn in heat. While bonded pairs try to seclude themselves from others during this time, it is not always possible. Among my people monogamy is an emotional attachment, not a sexual one." Loki explains.

"Soooo... if Thor had sex with someone else it would not be considered cheating, but if he bought them flowers it would?" Steve asks for clarification.

"Yes, that is the idea, but I know that the Aesir do consider sex with another to be an infidelity and if he ever does commit such an act I'll geld him in his sleep." Loki threatens as he looks at Thor, which actually brings a smile to Thor's face.

"Loki, what happens when an Aesir is around a Jotunn in heat? Have you ever seen the effects your people have on my people during that time?" Thor asks Loki.

"No, I have never seen it, but you have Thor. Remember that little skirmish in that village on Alfheim?" Loki asks. Thor and his men had slain about a dozen Jotunn that day and for some reason, when they were done, they had been filled with an unquenchable bloodlust that later carried on into the beds of every grateful farmer's daughter the village had. Thor fucked some poor girl all night until dawn and was still hard when he left her. That was just one of many instances. His eyes go wide with understanding. Thor had felt genuine physical pleasure when he killed Loki's people and without knowing associated regular lust and bloodlust together during those times. No wonder he was always so eager to face Jotunns on the battlefield. His desire to prove himself the alpha male by slaying something and mating something were all amplified by pheromones.

"Oh Loki..." Thor says mournfully. "I think at last I understand where my people's hatred of your people comes from."

The Kiss

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Thor sighs with exhaustion as he puts in the final stitch to the quilt. It looks stunning. He couldn't have accomplished this without the combined help of all his mortal friends. Another mortal holiday is only a few days away and Thor is excited to present this to Loki.

For some strange reason the humans have cut down a perfectly good young tree and have dragged it inside and decorated it. The branches left on it make it unusable as firewood, plus the wood is still too green. It does smell lovely though. It reminds Thor of home. Satisfied with his handiwork Thor carefully rolls up the quilt and ties it in position with a large ribbon. He places it under the tree.

It is almost dinner time when Tony, Bruce, and Loki appear. All three of them are laughing about something they did in the lab today. Thor doesn't understand a word they are saying but delights in the joy and happiness Loki is displaying. They catch each other's gaze and smile.

"You are in a good mood." Thor says warmly.

"I had a fun day at the office." Loki says. Thor is standing by the Christmas tree and Loki notes the new addition beneath it.

"It is finished?" Loki licks his lips in anticipation. He can't wait to see it.

"It is. I hope it will be to your satisfaction." Thor says as he closes the distance between himself and Loki. Thor's face is filled with such longing and Loki feels it too.

"Hey, I ordered Italian. You guys gonna come eat?" Tony bellows.

"Coming." Thor yells.

"Not yet you're not." Loki mutters with a naughty grin. Loki is so clueless and virginal about sex matters it surprises him when Loki makes little comments like that. He can only imagine what Loki will be like once he is thoroughly educated on carnal matters. Thor can't wait to break in the consummation quilt.

They stop in the doorway of the dining room, waiting for the others to finish filling their plates before approaching. They share another long wanting look in each other's eyes. Lust roles off them like a cloud.

"Hey! You two have to kiss!" Natasha yells at them. Thor and Loki turn to look at her, startled.

"What?" Loki asks.

"You're standing under mistletoe. It's tradition. Now pucker up!" Natasha says like she is barking an order. She makes it sound as though not kissing would be a great insult to her people. Thor is smiling ear to ear. The men turn back to one another and the air goes heavy again. Thor wraps one arm around Loki's waist as he places his palm under Loki's chin and dips his head down slowly. Loki holds his breath as his lips brush Thor's, ever so lightly. He gasps. Thor presses forward again and this time Thor tongue flicks into Loki's mouth. Loki relaxes and leans into Thor then and the kiss deepens. Loki arms wraps around Thor's neck and their passion ignites. The kiss lasts

a very long time and it isn't until Steve clears his throat that the pair returns to their senses. They break apart out of breath, with flushed red faces and eyes filled with hunger.

"You taste like Valhalla." Thor whispers.

"You taste like...like.....forbidden fruit. I want more." Loki says with his voice full of need.

"I want it too but you know we can't, not yet." Thor says low. Everyone is watching them and listening to every word.

"Hey Thor, that whole virgin bride rule, does that just apply to Loki's lady bits or does that include his man bits too?" Tony asks.

"There is no way to verify if a male is still a virgin or not, which is why such a requirement does not exist." Thor says as he considers the possibilities. "Come with me." Thor says dragging Loki back to his bedroom.

"OOOOOOHHHHH!" The group hoots and hollers. "Oh my god! They are so going to do... something." Natasha says like a giddy school girl.

Thor closes the door to his bedroom and turns to face Loki. "Thor, I don't want to do anything to jeopardize our future together." Loki says nervously.

"We won't. I want to give you a gift Loki. Think of it as an apology from the future King of Asgard to the future King of Jotunnheim." Thor says and he gets down on his knees. Loki's breath hitches as Thor opens his trousers. His quickly hardening cock bobs out as Thor pulls the fabric down.

"Perfect." Thor says as he gazes at the rosy tip. His lips engulf it and Loki yells from shock.

"Ah! Thor!" Loki has never felt such pleasure. It is so different from when he touches himself. Having another do it is amazing. Loki's scent fills Thor's sinuses and mouth as his head bobs eagerly between his thighs. Loki watches him in amazement. He would never have imagined such a thing happening a year ago, or even the first day he arrived here. Loki looks down at Thor and feels a touch of righteous smugness cross his lips. Yes, having the future King of Asgard suck his cock does make him feel better. Thor's eyes meet his and the look in them is full of love. Thor is sucking him reverently.

"Oh Thor....Darling!" Loki gasps as his cock pumps into Thor's mouth. Thor's calloused hand runs up his thigh as he drinks down his lover's essence. Thor pulls away and licks his lips. Loki's cunt is slick and dripping. Thor can smell it and see the sheen on Loki's inner thigh. He gets to his feet and pecks Loki and the forehead.

"You should go eat something before all the food is gone." Thor says.

"But what about you?" Loki says feeling guilty and selfish.

"It is best if I finish up here alone, the temptation would be too great otherwise." Thor chuckles darkly with a hooded gaze. Loki nods and slips past him to leave the room. Thor doesn't emerge from the room for a solid hour.

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Thor and Loki are curled up on the couch together as everyone watches a football game.

Loki likes this game. It is exciting and brutal just like sparring. Everyone is enjoying a beer and eating chips when the BiFrost lights up the balcony. It's Frigga.

"Mother, what news do you have of home and Jotunnheim?" Thor asks as he embraces her.

"Thor, your time to return to Asgard has come. Your father announced his impending abdication and your succession. You are being called back to prepare for the coronation." Frigga says.

"That is wonderful news." Thor says as he looks at Loki.

"Do not rejoice yet my son. You have many political obstacles to overcome in the next few days. The council is demanding that your future queen be selected and they are pressing your father to make a decision. I have stalled for as long as I can but I need you to convince your father that marriage is something you are eager to do but also take seriously. You must walk the tight rope of convincing him you are ready to settle down without him forcing you to take a bride. You need to let him know that you will give the matter the serious contemplation it deserves. If your father feels assured in your judgment he will leave the choice to you to make after you are crowned." Frigga says.

"He told you this?" Thor asks.

"Not in words my son, but I know your father. He will concede this small bit of control to you as a show of good faith and confidence. He is more consumed with letting go of everything else. His health is failing." Frigga says sadly.

"I will be careful." Thor says seriously.

"There is more. Loki, dear boy I regret to inform you that you are the last remaining survivor of your family. The only surviving Jotunns left on your world are those in the northern fishing village receiving our aide. You are now the rightful King of Jotunnheim." Frigga says. Loki bursts into tears as Thor arms encircle him. He sobs for moment as the tears streak his face.

"Do not despair. All is not lost. As King you now have the right to sue Asgard for peace." Frigga says.

"My father tried that for years, but his pleas fell on deaf ears." Loki says bitterly.

"Yes, but he did not have the benefit of the audience of all the other realms to hear them." Frigga says. "Listen very carefully to me Loki, for you must do everything I say exactly as I instruct."

Chapter End Notes

Hang on to your hats kids. Loki is going to Asgard!

Odin's Gift

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Loki touches down on Jotunnheim in the middle of the fishing village. He shifts his appearance quickly back to his natural form as his countrymen come out of their homes to spy on the visitor. They have grown accustomed to the BiFrost deliveries, but this is the first time a person has appeared. Loki clutches his scepter like a security blanket as his people gather around him, towering over him like statues. They all look well fed, much to Loki's relief.

"I am Loki Laufeyson, the last surviving member of the royal family and now your King." Loki announces. An elder Jotunn steps forward to address Loki, clearly the town elder.

"My King. I am Angreboda. What news do you have of the fate of Jotunnheim? We have been cut off from the rest of our people. Are we all that remains?" He asks.

"Yes." Loki states, his voice cracking. "You are the last of our race." Loki announces to everyone. The people sob and weep at this announcement, but Loki knows they are in need of comfort. "Fear not my people for I have come to you at a time of strategic importance. In three days I will venture to Asgard and attend the coronation of Prince Thor. It is there I will plead our case before Asgard's new king. I will sue for peace by means of a marriage alliance and regain the Casket of Ancient Winters and restore our world." Loki states boldly.

"My King, your words give us hope but there are many present that feel such a proposition will be denied out right. How do you know he will accept?" Angreboda presses.

"Prince Thor is the one that has been feeding you." Loki explains. The shock reverberates through the crowd at this revelation. Surely it is a lie! That devil would never show their people such compassion. Loki raises his hand to quiet the crowd. "It's true. Long has Prince Thor viewed our people as vermin deserving extermination, but fortune smiled upon me and I was given the rare opportunity to teach the spoiled Prince a lesson. He has seen the error of his ways, but Odin is still a threat. Until Thor is crowned our position is precarious. I will need a couple of you to venture with me to the coronation to act as my guards. This journey is not without danger, and I know I don't have to tell you of the hatred and vitriol you will face from Asgard's people. Who among you will travel with me?" Loki asks.

"My King, were it not for the light of the BiFrost we would not believe your words. For months we have wondered who our mysterious benefactor is. I will send with you my two eldest sons. They are large strong warriors that will protect you if the need arises." Angreboda says.

"I thank you for your sacrifice and vote of confidence." Loki says to him.

"My King, if this plan of yours should fail, what will become of our people?" He asks. Loki clutches the scepter tightly.

"I will deploy every tool at my disposal to ensure that does not happen." Loki says.

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"My son! Welcome home!" Odin says joyfully as he wraps his arms around Thor. Thor feels awkward hugging the man that raised him. He was always so loving and just to the people of Asgard. Now that he sees with father with new eyes he feels the instinct to recoil from him. Odin

looks old. His hair is even whiter than when Thor saw him last and his body is fragile.

“Father. I have missed you as well.” Thor says.

“Come. There are many important matters which I must discuss with you before the coronation. Things which I have kept secret even from my council and your mother. I must now impart those secrets to you.” Odin says.

“Are you finally going to tell me about the contents of the weapons vault?” Thor asks.

“Yes Thor. I know you are familiar with some of the objects therein, but I will now tell you about the rest. Just think, at this time in seven days you will be holding your first court. I hope you enjoy crop reports.” Odin chuckles.

“You know such bureaucracy was never my strong suit.” Thor says flatly.

“Tis true, but you may not find it so cumbersome should you find the right people to assist you. Your mother has been most helpful to me over the years in handling such mundane matters. You will need a wife that will support you in such a way.” Odin says.

“Agreed. I know I have not always treated marriage with the seriousness it deserves and have ruined far too many maiden’s chances at sharing the throne with me, but I am ready to do my duty to my people.” Thor says.

“The council and I have selected a fine wife for you. We could announce the betrothal and even hold the ceremony the same day as your coronation if you wish?” Odin asks.

“Father, I am sure the lady is a fine candidate, and I will give her full consideration, but I would like to at least be fond of my Queen and I will only know that if I am given opportunity to court her. If I find I must make a political alliance, then I will do so, but in light of all the new duties I must overtake I would not want to rush such an important decision. My reign would be doomed from the start if I married a woman who hates me.” Thor chuckles as he plays his part to perfection. It is just the statement Odin wanted to hear.

“You are right my son. You will be King in three days and I must trust your judgment.” Odin says. Thor holds in a sigh of relief. They are walking towards the weapons vault. The guards bow to their King and King apparent before opening the doors.

“The infinity gauntlet. A weapon so powerful and dangerous that for any one man to possess it and all the infinity stones would mean the end of existence. No one, not even I could ignore the temptation to sculpt the universe to my liking should all the pieces ever be assembled together. If it fell into the wrong hands it would mean our doom.” Odin says quietly.

“The tesseract, one of the said infinity stones, has the power to build or destroy whole worlds. Should you ever come across another, it would be wise to house it elsewhere.” Odin says.

“What about that object at the end?” Thor queries.

“Ah! The Casket of Ancient Winters. This is what I really wanted to show you. I know you know a little about it, but now I must tell you the rest. The life force of Jotunnheim is bound within it. It has taken over a thousand years but the Frost Giants have finally died off. This is my coronation gift to you Thor. Now that the last royal member of the house of Laufey has perished, the power of the Casket will come undone and will be dispersed back into the land. When it does, you will be able to mold and shape the entire world into an Aesir paradise, and our people will populate it. After your coronation we will take it to Jotunnheim and set it upon the ground where it

will disintegrate.” Odin says proudly. Thor feels a sick twist in his gut.

“All of the Jotunns are dead?” Thor asks.

“It appears so. I have looked in their great city and in some of the smaller cities that surround the castle and found no signs of life. If there are any left we will easily dispatch them.” Odin says confidently.

“Father, will the monarchs of the other realms not look poorly upon us for having killed off an entire species? Are we not guilty of the same crime for which we punished the Frost Giants?” Thor asks even though his instincts scream at him to keep silent.

“The power of the Casket is not well understood by the other realms. The fact that it contains the life force of that world is not common knowledge outside of Jotunnheim. You would be wise to keep that secret. It is one thing to impose political restrictions, but if the other monarchs discovered we had a direct hand in their extinction by keeping the Casket from them the uproar would lead to war.” Odin explains.

“I thought we were punishing them for what they tried to do to the mortals?” Thor asks.

“Protecting the mortals was a convenient excuse. I too coveted the rich and fertile land of Midgard for our people but I decided to be patient. Instead of invading Midgard and exterminating the mortals ourselves I took up the morale high road and defended their world all while waiting for Jotunnheim to slowly die and take that world when the moment is right. Now we appear blameless and we will get a whole new world to colonize. Had I tried to conquer Midgard directly the other realms would have united against us in fear.” Odin explains.

“Do you not care for the mortals at all?” Thor asks.

“The mortal’s lives are so short Thor. They are as pets to us. Perhaps on a new Jotunnheim they can serve a valuable purpose. In exchange for saving their species from extinction all those years ago, they can show Asgard their gratitude with indentured labor.”

“You mean slavery.” Thor states.

“Yes. They are not as strong as our people, but they don’t eat as much either. Their short lives make them ideal as disposable servants. Come now, I must now show you the inner workings of the treasury.” Odin says casually.

Chapter End Notes

So how do you guys see the coronation playing out?

The Coronation

“....and I Odin the Allfather proclaim you King of Asgard!” Odin bellows for all to hear. With these words Odin relinquishes his powers as King. All the spells of power and protection attached to the throne drain out of Odin and into Thor. Thor feels the power surge through him. It is similar to the first time he picked up Mjolnir, a strange and wonderful new sensation. It is a power that Odin cannot reclaim. It is Thor’s now, permanent and binding. Odin’s ravens, once perched upon the throne shrivel up and turn white. Mixed in among their desiccated bones are two eggs which will hatch into Thor’s ravens. Odin is naught but an opinionated old man now. Queen Frigga is affected as well. She ages visibly before everyone. Her power lies dormant and waits to embody a new queen. Thor is shocked by the transformation.

Thor glows bright like the sun and the audience applauds and cheers for their new king. The foreign dignitaries do as well having full faith and confidence in Thor. Almost every monarch from every realm is present, save Midgard and Jotunnheim. Thor soaks in the praise of his people before continuing on with his mother’s plan. His first statement as king is worded very carefully.

“I, Thor the Allfather, invite any monarch from any realm to approach me with their contracts for peace and trade. May our continued alliances be friendly and fruitful.” Thor announces. It is the phrase Heimdall has been waiting for. On cue the BiFrost lights up. Loki and his small entourage step forth in their humble regalia. Heimdall summons a dozen guards to the gatehouse. When they arrive they all reach for their weapons at the sight of the frost giants, but Heimdall raises his hand.

“Stop! King Loki of Jotunnheim is requesting a formal audience with King Thor. Our King has invited all monarchs from every realm to do so. You are henceforth charged with the safety of the Jotunn delegation. Failure to protect them will mean your disgrace. Is that understood?” Heimdall asks them.

“Yes sir!” The men chant. The formation of soldiers surrounds Loki and his guards and marches them all forward as a group down the BiFrost towards the palace. The tension in the group is palpable but no one speaks as they make the long trek to throne room.

Thor is finishing up a grand speech about the future, and of hope and prosperity when gasps ring out from the far back of the audience. In the distance two tall lumbering blue figures are visible above the crowd. They are Loki’s men. Thor schools his features. The exchange that is about to take place must play out perfectly. If anyone suspects Thor knew any of this was going to happen the people of Asgard could revolt. Odin’s one eye glares at the approaching Jotunns. No! It cannot be! The crowd rumbles and groans in protest as the Jotunns approach ever closer to their new king. Loki stops before the dais and addresses him.

“I King Loki Laufeyson of Jotunnheim request a formal audience with the new King of Asgard.” Loki announces boldly with acid lacing his voice.

“Speak.” Thor says curtly.

“I have come to sue for peace and for the return of the life force of Jotunnheim, The Casket of Ancient Winters, without which my world will die.” Loki says. King Frey and the other dignitaries’ ears perk up at this statement. Loki is in his natural form and fanning himself vigorously.

“And why should I return to you the Casket? How do I know you will not simply turn it

against my people and wage war against Asgard?" Thor says.

"My people are almost extinct. Without the Casket to fortify my world the Jotunn race has diminished. We that once numbered in the millions now number less than 600. The crime for which my people were punished is being committed against us by Asgard, by Odin, and now by you! How can you let my race die off and not call yourself a hypocrite? For centuries my father begged for mercy, for leniency, and for forgiveness. Your father gave us none; though it does not surprise me. Once all of my people are dead you can take the Casket back to Jotunnheim and reshape my world to your liking, into an Aesir paradise." Loki accuses as he continues flapping a feather fan over his sweating form.

"Is this true?!" King Frey yells. The other monarchs and dignitaries look horrified also. The people of Asgard are shamed into silence. The guilt is universal as every person from every realm present feels culpable in the demise of the Jotunn race. Even King Frey had his part to play by refusing trade or immigration with the beleaguered realm. All the monarchs did. They will not be party to this genocide now. None of them have ever particularly liked the Jotunn race, but that bigotry has enabled an evil they can no longer ignore.

"Mercy King Thor!" One of the elf women yells. More call out for mercy, mostly people from other realms. The rulers of these realms are eyeing one another. Thor has no doubt they will be convening their own private war councils after they leave Asgard. If Odin could do this to Jotunnheim, what is to stop Thor from conquering their realms for colonization? People in the crowd look at Odin with new eyes. Odin for his part feels the walls closing in as the truth of his monstrous plan is made public before all. He grabs Thor's shoulder to whisper into his son's ear. Thor growls at him.

"You have done enough father." Thor says to Odin in a low voice. Odin backs away fearfully. Thor has been on the throne less than an hour and already his reign and legacy is under threat from the sins of his father. Odin knows Thor will have to sacrifice him to save himself and the future of Asgard. If Asgard walks away from today's events without a war being declared it will be a miracle.

Thor stands to address Loki and the crowd as well.

"If what you say is true, then I and my people have committed a terrible crime against yours. I would return the Casket to you, but I need reassurances that you will not turn it against Asgard should I do so." Thor says.

"...and I need reassurances that Asgard will never attack Jotunnheim again. Excuse me for a moment. The heat of this realm is untenable. Pardon me while I slip into something more comfortable." Loki says before shifting into milky skin and green eyes. A roar of amazement washes over the crowd. "Ah, where was I? Oh yes, to address both our concerns I propose that a political marriage be arranged." Loki says.

"You wish me to marry a giantess?" Thor asks while keeping his poker face straight.

"Giantess? We Jotunn are both male and female in one. There is no such thing as giantesses. I propose that you and I wed. I being a runt am the perfect size to wed an Aesir, and thanks in no small part to my small stature my virtue is still intact and you can be assured that any child I carry will be your offspring." Loki says. Rumbles from the people of Asgard roll out as they balk at the suggested union. "I will bear you a minimum of two children, so that one each may sit upon a throne in Asgard and Jotunnheim so that never again will our peoples war with one another. What say you Thor Odinson?"

The ensuing silence is deafening. No one stirs, no one speaks, no one breathes. Every foreign dignitary present gives Thor the same look in their eyes. You will do this or we go to war. Thor bites the inside of his cheek to hide his glee.

“I accept.” Thor bellows. The crowd roars with a mixture of cheers and rabbles. “Bring forth the temple priest. We shall hand fasten now in front of all you and consummate our union before all the other heads of state.”

The temple priest stumbles forth from the crowd with a mixture of shock and hesitation written all over him. A palace servant runs up to him and hands him a binding ribbon and a chalice. Loki takes his position beside Thor on the dais as the priest gets into position. Thor and Loki both hold back their smiles as the chanting begins. The priest performs the sacred rights as he passes a knife between Thor and Loki. They each cut their hands and drip the blood into the chalice which is filled with wine. Their cut hands are bound with the ribbon as the chalice passes between their lips. The ribbon shimmers and disappears into their skin and the ceremony is done.

Loki feels power course through his body as the powers of the Allmother consume him. He is the God of Marriage and Fertility now. His new found power is making itself evident in a very unexpected way. The people gathered get a blast of pheromones as Loki’s heat ignites. The two Jotunn that accompanied Loki sniff the air and growl.

“Please escort my countrymen back to the BiFrost. I no longer have need of their protection.” Loki pants as sweat drips down his temple. Thor smells the sweet heady aroma and curses himself for not recognizing it for what it was all those times in battle. His countrymen become unruly as lust and animosity combine to create a reaction to which Thor is all too familiar.

“The bedding ceremony will commence immediately.” Thor announces and beckons the heads of state to follow. The servants rush to set up the viewing room as the royal guests gather inside. Though it is traditional for the bride and groom to separate and prepare prior to this event, Thor will not let Loki out of his sight, not now. A servant brings them the long white dressing gowns and closes the doors to antechamber. Thor turns his back to Loki to let him change with some measure of modesty.

“Thor you are about to fuck me in front of other people. You can look at me.” Loki says as he strips off his ceremonial skirt and adornments.

“I wish I could make love to you. I mean...that our first encounter together could be an act of love not politics. I am so relieved Loki. I did not think this would go as smoothly as it has.” Thor says.

“Don’t lower your guard just yet. I am certain an assassination plot is hatching as we speak. Let’s just get through this official rutting and then talk about how we want to proceed.” Loki says quietly. He didn’t really think all of this would work either. He can’t believe he’s here and that they are married and about to have sex. Loki’s hands shake as he pulls the dressing gown over his head.

“Loki, before we go in there, I just wanted to tell you, that I love you.” Thor says as he takes Loki’s hand in his. Tears come to Loki’s eyes which he quickly wipes away.

“I know.”

Coming Together

The large doors of the viewing room swing open. Thor and Loki walk inside to a bedroom filled with Kings, Queens, Princes, and nobles all gathered to watch. Loki keeps a stoic face as Thor guides him by the hand towards the bed. The top cover is already pulled back and a thick white satin sheet with red embroidery covers the bed. It is then that Loki remembers the consummation quilt. It is still under the Christmas tree on Midgard. Loki and Thor had both completely forgotten about it in the midst of all the intrigue. Loki wants to cry but holds back his emotions. People will think he's crying because Thor is about to fuck him.

They climb into bed and pull up the cover. The white gossamer curtains block out Loki's view of the people in the room. He is both grateful and alarmed by this. What if they all decide to sneak up on them in their middle of their mating and kill them both? Loki clears his head of the thought. These are the Kings and Queens of Vanaheim, Alfheim, and Svartleheim. If anything they will protect Loki and pull Thor off of him the moment they feel Thor is hurting him. Thor pulls his dressing gown off and tosses it away. Loki decides to do the same. Their lower bodies are still covered by the bedspread so he needn't worry about being exposed.

The moment comes and Thor and Loki stare at one another, unsure of how to begin. Loki's scent is heavy now and Thor can feel the arousal thrumming through his veins. Someone in the room coughs as another person shifts in their seat, making the chair creak. Thor can also smell the arousal of everyone else present. Like Thor they are affected by Loki's pheromones. It is a small comfort to Thor to know that they will suffer through the ceremony as Thor and Loki make love.

Thor leans in and kisses Loki. It is a slow shy tender kiss that begs permission to do more. Loki gives him that permission by leaning in and wrapping his arms around Thor. They lean back into the bed. After a minute of kissing Thor mounts Loki. Thor drops his head next to Loki's ear to whisper to him.

"I will be as quick as I can so that they leave." Thor says. Loki nods and feels the press of Thor's cock at his entrance.

"Ah!" Loki gasps as his womb stretches uncomfortably. Thor feels Loki's inner barrier break and the additional lubrication of blood stains the sheet beneath them. Thor stills then.

"When you are ready I will move." Thor whispers. Loki catches his breath and nods again. Thor starts a gentle pace but quickens it to expedite his release. He knows he is not giving Loki the pleasure he deserves but they both want this humiliation to be over. Thor releases into Loki with a loud cry before collapsing on top of him. Thor and Loki shift their weight to remove the sheet. Thor hands it off to someone, he doesn't look at who it is. The sound of shuffling feet fills the room before the doors close with a heavy thud.

"Are we alone?" Loki asks. Thor gets up to inspect the room. He wouldn't put it past an assassin to linger behind.

"We are." Thor says as he locks the door. A loud roar is heard outside as the consummation sheet is hung from the balcony for the entire kingdom to see. The Asgardians have no choice but to accept that their new queen is a Jotunn. Shock and disbelief floods the kingdom. They have to curtsy to Loki.

"Thor....I need you." Loki pants. His need is urgent. He has never felt this fire beneath

his skin before. The quick unsatisfying rut they just had only served to make his loins scream.

“I’m here darling. I’ll take care of you.” Thor says. Loki bursts into tears then. “What is wrong my love?”

“We forgot the quilt.” Loki says.

“No my love, we did not.” Thor smiles. He gets up and walks over to a cupboard and pulls out the roll.

“Considering our impromptu nuptials, I knew that we would not be able to explain this. Besides, I wanted to wait until we were alone to break it in properly.” Thor says. Loki unties the ribbon and spreads it out to admire Thor’s effort. Loki is completely surprised by the level of detail and craftsmanship displayed. Loki would not believe Thor did this himself if not for all the times he saw Thor put new bandages on his fingertips. Tears burn his eyes afresh.

“How? You do not know how to sew. How ever did you manage this?” Loki’s voice cracks.

“Our mortal friends were invaluable in aiding me. I dare say Natasha got in many chuckles at my expense knowing that this tradition was all made up.” Thor says. The lion is exquisitely stitched in several shades of yellow, gold, and brown. The leafy design that surrounds it even carries over onto Loki’s side of the quilt uniting the two sides elegantly.

“You knew? You knew it was a lie and you did this for me anyway?” Loki asks.

“Yes, of course.” Thor grins.

“I love you.” Loki pulls Thor on top of him and wraps his legs around Thor’s hips. Thor’s cock slips inside and this time he takes his time with Loki.

“You smell like Valhalla.” Thor says roughly. They interlace their hands as Thor attacks the flesh of Loki’s neck. Loki’s hand grips Thor’s large bicep and the muscle ripples beneath his touch. Thor rocks into him steadily as he nips and sucks on sensitive flesh. Thor is so powerful and massive. His bronzed skin is like silk beneath Loki’s fingertips, which glows with warmth.

“Oh! Ah!....Thor! Thor my body! I can feel.....I can feel.....AHHH!” Loki’s womb clenches down hard on Thor’s shaft, strangling and milking it for every bit of seed.

“Ah FUCK! Loki! Uhhhh!” Thor grunts and keens a high pitched whine. He rolls off Loki a panting drenched mess. They lay there for a moment catching their breath.

“Well husband I think it is time you taught me the art of fellatio.” Loki grins.

Elsewhere in the Palace....

Odin paces his chambers back and forth while Frigga watches.

“How did he get into Asgard?” Odin yells. He is still trying to sort out how everything fell apart. He thought for sure that little runt of Laufey’s had perished on the night of Laufey’s murder.

“...and how in blazes did he know that Thor was going to make that decree or to ask at the exact right moment to beg entry into Asgard? Heimdall did this. Heimdall has betrayed this family!” Odin seethes.

“Heimdall was following the order of his king. Long have the Jotunns petitioned you for an audience.” Frigga says flatly.

“That Loki...he said that there were 600 survivors. Where? And why did Heimdall not alert me to their existence. I would have sent the army to stamp them out!” Odin bellows.

“Perhaps because he is a man of conscience dear husband.” Frigga says sarcastically. Odin stops and turns his gaze to her then. His one good eye scans over her suspiciously.

“I wouldn’t like to think that *you* had anything to do with this dear wife?” Odin says accusingly.

“Of course not husband, I’m just a fertile womb to fuck.” Frigga says recalling a crude comment Odin had made all those years ago on their wedding day. Odin stares at her aghast. A loud knock comes at their chamber doors.

“Enter.” Frigga chirps brightly. Odin sputters at the interruption. Odin’s councilmen enter the room. Their demeanor is grim.

“Odin Borson, former King of Asgard, Allfather, and leader of its peoples; you have committed a terrible crime against a branch of Yggdrasil, and have inflicted untold damage upon your legacy and that of our new king. While your son works to repair Asgard’s relations with Jotunnheim, we feel it is incumbent upon us to protect Asgard’s people from any potential fallout from today’s revelations.”

“You filthy backstabbing cowards! You would turn on me now after all the years of service and loyalty we have shared? You hated the Jotunns just as much as I and if not for that little whelp showing up today I would have your full support!” Odin screams.

“As we speak King Frey and the others plot against Asgard. They fear that Thor is too much like you and will try to conquer them as well. Asgard’s army may be mighty and strong but it cannot withstand the combined armies of five other realms! Odin Borson, for your crimes you are to be banished to Jotunnheim where you will face the judgment of Loki’s people.”

“NO! Frigga help me!” Odin begs his wife as guards surround him.

“I cannot jeopardize Thor’s reign or the lives of our people Odin. Either you face punishment or we all do. Take him.” Frigga chokes back tears. She did feel something akin to love for Odin, a kind of friendship of sorts that they cultivated together over the years. There were many years of good times and happy memories but there was also evil, and Frigga could turn a blind eye to it no longer. Odin screams as he is dragged away. When the doors to Frigga and Odin’s chambers close, Frigga falls on her bed and weeps.

People watch in horror as Odin is dragged past them out of the palace, through the city, and down to the Bifrost. It is a public spectacle meant for both the people of Asgard and for all the foreigners present. It is a long journey to the gatehouse and Odin’s screams do not abate. When Odin is brought before the portal he sneers at Heimdall.

“You betrayed me.” Odin accuses.

“You betrayed me too. For years I believed I was serving a good man and a good king. Year after year I listened as the pleas of the Jotunns were denied. I thought you were merely punishing them. Not until the people started dying off in droves did I realize your true intent. Thor will not be like you, and we will have King Loki to thank for that.” Heimdall says and he pushes

the sword down to open the Bifrost.

“No! NOOOOOOOOO!” Odin yells as he is pushed forward by many hands. He flies through the air and lands hard in the middle of a desolate, god forsaken little village. Odin looks around nervously as red eyes peer out of windows and emerge from doorways. The Jotunns gather around him and mutter among themselves. Finally one steps forward.

“Allfather.” Angreboda says darkly. Odin prays that the Odinsleep will take him, but he is no longer the Allfather. Thor is the Allfather now, and from time to time Thor will go into the Thorsleep. Odin trembles as he faces his executioners. Many hands grab hold of him and pull him in every direction. His entrails are spread to the four corners of the village.

Blossoming Winter

Thor and Loki spent three days in the honeymoon chamber alone with only a single servant popping in and out periodically to see to their needs. Normally the honeymoon would last two solid weeks but Loki needs to get the Casket to Jotunnheim quickly and Thor has many political fires to put out. The first thing they need to do is announce Loki's pregnancy at a very public dinner and put forth a show of unity.

"These clothes fit very well." Loki says as he puts on a new tunic and trouser set. They are emerald green and exquisitely embroidered.

"My mother probably had a hand in that." Thor smiles. He feels pensive. His mind has been a tumult as to what to do about his father. The other realms will surely demand punishment but the thought of reprimanding his father makes Thor feel like a five year old child again. He needs to speak with his mother about this. She'll know what to do.

Thor and Loki leave their quarters and stroll down the corridor arm in arm. The servants bow but stare as they pass. The couple can hear them whisper as they pass. They make it to the feasting hall where the coronation celebration is still carrying on. However, Thor and Loki do not get the cheers a new king would expect to receive. There is an odd and pregnant silence that pervades the hall. It makes the hair on the back of Thor's neck stand on end.

Frigga stands from her spot at the high table, looking worn and surprised. She did not expect them to come out of the honeymoon suite so soon. She had hoped to speak with Thor in private about Odin's execution.

"Thor, my son. We must speak." Frigga says with panic in her voice.

"Yes of course." Thor says. Frigga leads the couple into a side room.

"What is wrong." Thor asks.

"Sit down Thor. There is something I must tell you." Frigga says. "Your father is dead."

Thor jumps up from his seat and paces a bit as tears flood his eyes.

"He was murdered?" Thor's voice is full of heartbreak.

"No Thor. He was executed." Frigga says.

"Executed? I am the King of Asgard, how can an execution have been conducted without my approval?" Thor booms.

"At this moment, right now, the monarchs of the other realms are debating whether or not they should punish the whole of Asgard for your father's misconduct. They fear you will carry on his cruelty. The council passed judgment and the sentence was carried out. Your involvement in the decision was removed for a purpose. Look at me my son, could you have passed judgment on him? Truly? Could you have sentenced your father to his death?" Frigga asks Thor as she cups her son's cheeks in her hands.

"How did he die?" Thor sobs.

"He was given over to Loki's people." Frigga says. Loki's eyes go wide. It is the last

thing he wanted or expected. Such a thing will surely drive a wedge between him and Thor.

“No! Why would you do that? You knew my people would be brutal! How could they not, after all that they have endured?” Loki says horrified.

“Odin chose his death long ago.” Frigga says.

“Mother? Did you not love him at all?” Thor asks her.

“I loved the parts of him that were good. He was a good king to his people. He was beloved by the Aesir for a reason. He was also evil Thor. This you know, and for any of us to allow him to go unpunished would make us culpable in his misdeeds. You are a good man now. I feared for so long that you would be just like him. The path you were traveling all but guaranteed it. If Loki had not come along and changed your heart, you would have continued your father’s work and destroyed your soul.” Frigga says.

Thor pulls his mother close and cries into her shoulder for a very long time. The wind blows and the rain comes down hard. All in Asgard can see Thor’s grief in the sky.

Thor dries his tears and blows his nose. It is obvious he has been crying, but that is a good thing. The people need to see him mourn. He takes Loki’s hand into his, returns to the feasting hall and takes up his seat. The silence is gone. The people are speculating what Thor will do next. Thor’s face is still red when he stands before them to address them.

“Good people of Asgard, it is my duty and my joy to inform you that Loki is with child. Normally our honeymoon would last much longer, but Loki’s people are in dire straits. Loki and I will be travelling to Jotunnheim today with the Casket to start much needed repairs to the realm. I ask for your patience during this time of transition and that you show any Jotunn visitors we receive the same level of kindness and compassion I show to my Queen. I thank you for your well wishes and condolences for the loss of my father. It means a great deal to me.” Thor say solemnly and returns to his seat.

Loki takes Thor’s hand into his and strokes the blonde hair at his temple. “I am so sorry.” Loki whispers to him. “Do you hate me?”

“No. What happened is not your fault, and I cannot begrudge your people the justice they so deserve. Your entire family is dead along with countless scores of your people. I accept what happened.” Thor says.

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Heimdall touches down in the middle of the Jotunn fishing village and waits for the people to gather.

“Their Majesties King Loki and King Thor will arrive momentarily. They will have the Casket with them. I would ask that you please take down the pieces of Odin in deference to them.” Heimdall says.

“So they are wed?” Angreboda asks.

“Yes. Loki carries the next king of Asgard in his womb and will bear another to be the next king of your people. The conflict is over.” Heimdall says.

“We will do as you ask.” Angreboda says. He gestures to his people to take down Odin’s head from off the spike along with other various bits. The Bifrost light envelopes Heimdall and in a flash he is gone.

Moments later Thor and Loki arrive. Thor hands Loki the Casket which causes his camouflage to evaporate, turning back to his natural blue. Thor kisses Loki’s forehead tenderly and strokes his hair. The Jotunns watching are amazed. They did not expect such sweetness from Thor towards one of their own.

“Hold on to me.” Loki says to Thor. “It’s going to get a bit windy. All of you must find shelter now.” Loki shouts. Loki’s people run back into their homes but perch at their windows to watch the miracle. Thor wraps his arms around Loki’s waist as Loki’s pops off the lid of the Casket.

Loki feels the ancient power of his world course through him. It is awesome and frightening. The first thing Loki notices are the red fire blossoms of his youth sprouting from the ground around him. He hasn’t seen them in so long. Other plants start shooting out of the ground, some of them with frightening speed. Dragonberry trees, yucca grass, icicle bushes, and many other bountiful plants come back to life. Thor hangs on as the cold and ice blast around him. Loki channels the power for a good hour before feeling exhaustion take him. He puts the lid back on the Casket and places it on the ground. Loki’s people come out of their homes to gawk and observe the beautiful bounty their world has been devoid of for centuries. They cheer and rejoice, hugging one another in relief. Loki curls against Thor’s chest feeling very drained. Thor picks him up and cradles his new bride lovingly.

“Loki is in need of rest.” Thor says. Angreboda steps forward.

“You may use my home. Come.” Angreboda picks up the Casket and carries it for them and leads them to his modest dwelling not far from the village square. Thor places Loki on the bed reverently and curls in beside him. He watches the pair in curious fascination. Far from a forced marriage born of politics Thor and Loki appear to be quite enamored with one another. Angreboda is grateful that his people satisfied their bloodlust by killing Odin. Thor is an easy target right now and many of the people in his village carry a personal grievance with Asgard’s new king.

“You were magnificent my darling.” Thor says to Loki as he pulls him close and rubs his belly. “Our children will be so beautiful.” Thor kisses Loki in a soft languid fashion.

“I thought you did not like my natural form?” Loki says lazily.

“It’s growing on me.” Thor says as he nibbles on Loki’s neck. Loki can feel Thor’s arousal pressing against his thigh and smiles. He’s tired so if Thor wants to rut him, he’s going to have to do all the work. Angreboda quickly retreats from the domicile to give the couple their privacy.

Ashes

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The balcony of Avenger's Tower lights up and Heimdall steps forth to speak with Thor and Loki's friends.

"Hey it's Oscar!" Tony quips. Everyone walks outside to meet with the man. Thor and Loki have been gone four months and they have received no news of their condition.

"Their Majesties King Thor and King Loki request your presence in the great hall. They wish for all of you to come and stay in the palace to celebrate their marriage and coronations." Heimdall says.

"How many days should we expect to be gone?" Steve asks.

"Celebrations such as this typically last several days." Heimdall says.

"We'll go pack." Bruce says. Everyone rushes inside and grabs a suitcase.

"Should we grab formal wear?" Clint asks concerned. He doesn't own a tuxedo.

"Their majesties have arranged for proper attire befitting each of you." Heimdall explains.

"I'll just bring my shield then." Steve says.

"Do you really think you'll need it?" Bruce asks.

"I feel naked without it." Steve says.

"If you're taking the shield I'm taking my iron suitcase." Tony says. He hates to admit it, but standing next to Steve without his Iron Man suit in a crowd full of people that have never heard of Tony Stark, the legend, the man makes him feel.....not the center of attention.

"I'm bringing my toothbrush, my makeup, and a fist full of underwear then." Natasha says as she stuffs her purse. Within seconds everyone is ready. They get sucked up into the sky like pebbles in a slingshot and land at the gatehouse a little harshly. Tony lands on his face.

"Welcome to Asgard." Loki says with a wide grin. Tony groans as he looks up into the Jotunn King's face. "A simple bow would have sufficed Anthony, you needn't grovel so."

"You people need install seatbelts on that thing." Tony complains. Heimdall gives a deep lush chuckle behind him. He stumbles to his feet and joins the others in ogling the golden realm.

"Holy shit, no wonder Thor is so tan." Clint says as they step out of the gatehouse to enjoy the view of Asgard. Everything glows of gold and sunlight. Sunglasses appear from pockets, purses, and satchels and are donned immediately. The city is not the only thing that is glowing.

"Loki you look beautiful." Natasha comments as she takes in Loki's pregnant form. The belly is obvious on Loki's slender frame. The pregnancy still has a ways to go.

"Thank you my friend." Loki says as he leads the group to large floating silver boat.

Everyone boards and Loki gives his command to the driver. "To the main hall please." Loki says politely.

"Yes my Queen." The guard says formally.

"Queen? Aren't you a King?" Tony asks.

"To the Aesir, I am Queen, wife of Thor and mother of the next King of Asgard. To my people I am King, father of the next generation to wield the power of the Casket. I find my time equally split these days." Loki says.

"How are your people Loki?" Steve asks.

"Better. The ones that survived are thriving now. I have spent the last several weeks repairing much of my world. There is now food a plenty for every Jotunn left ten times over. My world is a paradise again. All that is left is replacing the large animals that all died out."

"I thought all the animals went extinct." Bruce says.

"They did. I have to borrow animals from other realms and use the magic of the Casket to transform them into something that can survive on a frozen world. They won't be the same as the animals we had before, but I will try to come as close as I can to the original." Loki explains

"We didn't hear from either of you for a long time. We worried about you." Steve says.

"What happened?" Tony asks. Loki's eyes hover over to the driver and the others take the hint. Loki's answers will be cryptic and guarded here.

"A miracle of sorts. When Thor was crowned he made of declaration of letting all rulers from all realms come to speak before him to build on old treaties and create new ones. At that moment, in my desperation I called out to Heimdall, begging for mercy for my people and he answered. I stood before Thor, all of Asgard, and before every foreign dignitary from the nine realms and told the people of Odin's crimes. The other realms were naturally, horrified. Fearing Thor's reign would be naught but a continuance of Odin's Thor had no choice but to marry me to create and seal a peace treaty between our people. We were wed and consummated the marriage that very hour."

"So why only now are you celebrating?"

"We needed to give Thor a proper amount of time to mourn his father's death." Loki says soberly. He tells his friends about the nature of Odin's demise and warns them not to bring it up in Thor's presence. Despite Thor's assurances the poor man is having nightmares. The pain is still too raw.

"That's.....damn. I feel bad for him." Tony says. His own father had been a distant cold man but he still loved him.

"How is Asgard treating you Loki?" Natasha asks.

"With the all forced respect of a hated Schoolmarm." Loki says as he crosses his arms and legs. "They all wish I would drop dead, but they know that if their prayers were ever answered the other realms would see my death as the broken treaty it is and war would come to Asgard. I am the only reason the Vanir, the light elves, the dark elves, the dwarves, and the fire giants have not laid waste to their land and people. You'd think they'd be more grateful." Loki says, clearly trying to get a rise out of the royal guard driving their transport. They man stays silent.

“Well we hope to be better company.” Clint says.

“Fuck yeah. We’re gonna party like it’s 1499! Bring on the tavern wenches or whatever the hell it is you people have up here.” Tony says.

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Steve and the others come before Thor in the large throne room. Where there had once been one throne there is now two. It is a strong signal to the people of Asgard and the other monarchs about Loki’s standing in the power structure. They bow as Loki instructed them. They must remember the royal protocols while in Asgard. Now that Thor has been crowned there are formalities that must be observed.

“My friends! Welcome to Asgard!” Thor beams brightly as he hops down from the seat of power to hug his friends. Thor has found honesty and friendship rare commodities of late. The Lady Sif and Warriors Three seem distant. He knows it is because of the way Odin was killed. They do not trust Thor’s new spouse and suspect Loki of bewitching Thor. Thor has told them nothing of what transpired on Midgard. Only Frigga and Heimdall know the truth.

“You’re Majesty.” Everyone replies.

“Come. Let me show you to your quarters and then we can feast and drink together.” Thor says happily. The stress lines around his eyes are noticeable. The burden of the crown is heavy.

The group is amazed by their accommodations as well as by the sweet Medieval times clothes that are intricately embroidered and stitched. Clint’s eyes rake over Natasha as he takes in her lovely form in a gorgeous corseted number. Nat hates it.

“This is revenge for all the shopping I put you through on earth isn’t it?” Nat says to Loki. Loki smirks.

“But you look amazing.” Loki says.

“I can’t breathe in this thing.” Nat complains.

“Yes but your breasts have never been perkier.” Loki says naughtily.

“Yeah well, if my skin turns blue it’s not because I’m a frost giant.” Nat says.

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Thor and Loki invite their mortal friends to their private chambers to enjoy a small feast away from the prying eyes of Asgard’s people. Thor dismisses the servants for the evening and relaxes for the first time in months.

“You look tired Thor. How is kingship treating you?” Tony asks.

“The transition has been difficult. There are many that agree with what my father did and hate Loki for exposing the truth. They wish my father had succeeded.” Thor says.

“That’s fucked up Thor.” Clint says.

“There are even some that blame me for his death and there are plots to kill both Loki and myself.”

“Political coups such as this are not uncommon during a regime change. We will endure.” Loki says as he strokes Thor’s cheek. “It is an irony, but the very threat of war from the other realms is also what is keeping revolt from cropping up here in Asgard. The people know that if they try to overthrow Thor and me the other realms will attack. If I die suddenly the other realms attack. If I am disrespected in any way the other realms attack. The people of Asgard have no choice but to accept my rule and status as Thor’s Queen.”

“I am so sick with it all, I am tempted to abandon the people and leave them to suffer that very fate.” Thor says as he drinks from his mug.

“A king that abandons his people is no longer a king.” Loki says.

“The people of Asgard do not deserve one.” Thor says. Loki knows it is more than the ale behind his words. Thor is serious.

“Would that I could change the hearts of men, but they are hateful people just as you once were.” Loki says.

“You did change my heart, the heart of a king. Perhaps the people of Asgard require suffering just as I did.” Thor says. Loki regards his husband carefully.

“Letting your people starve is a recipe for revolution Thor. No good will come of it. The people will simply see you as an unfit ruler unable to care for his people.”

“I wish they could feel the suffering of your people as I felt yours. They would learn then Loki. They would understand.”

“Perhaps they can.” Loki says then as he thinks it over.

“What do you mean?” Natasha asks.

“I’m not sure. On my next trip to Jotunnheim I’ll go to the old palace library and do some research. There are old sacred texts there filled with information about the Casket. The Casket has many secrets my father never bothered teaching me.”

“It would be poetic if you could put the memories of all your dead people into the heads of the people here. It’s a punishment they deserve.” Steve says remembering the Jewish concentration camps in Germany and France.

“You may be onto something Captain.” Loki says. The Avengers stay in Asgard for several days comforting Thor and Loki. Tony and the others worry about their non-human friends but they know there is only so much they can do. Thor and Loki will have to wade through the politics alone. Their honest kinship and candor lifts Thor’s heart and Loki’s spirits and the group’s departure is bittersweet. Loki promises to invite them all up again when the baby arrives.

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Loki touches down just outside the old palace. It is a graveyard. Rather than try to rebuild everything that was lost, Loki covered his entire world in a thick sheet of ice and started over. Some memories are better left buried. Loki climbs in through a second story window and lights his way through the dark stairs with light from a magic beacon. He made it with power from the Casket. He passes through the throne room and stifles a cry. There, sitting on the throne is Helblindi; a skeleton looking out upon his kingdom of death.

“You outlasted almost everyone didn’t you? How many of your friends did you wind up eating in

the end?” Loki asks the lifeless mummy. In this moment Loki is grateful that only the fishing people survived. Restarting Jotunn civilization with people like Helblindi would have been impossible. They were too far gone in the end. Loki’s knows his father’s cooked bones are probably somewhere nearby, but he doesn’t look too closely at any of the bodies. He doesn’t need to know.

Loki steps over bones and fleshless carcasses as he searches the library for the ancient tomes he needs to study. He finds what he needs and leaves the decaying castle behind, calling up to Heimdall to transport him to the fishing village on the coast. He remains there for several days, seeing to the needs of his people and studying the manuscripts. After eight days of research Loki finds a solution that is acceptable. Asgard will face punishment.

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Loki is due to give birth within days. Thor announces to his people that he and Loki are going to Jotunnheim where Loki will give birth before his people so that they may know that their future king is a true Jotunn/Aesir hybrid. This time Loki leaves the Casket of Ancient Winters behind in Asgard. Frigga accompanies the couple to help see to the newborn babe when it comes out, among other reasons.

Thor and Frigga are already at the gatehouse with Heimdall. They are waiting on Loki. He is in the weapon’s vault chanting a spell over the Casket. When the chant is complete Loki removes the lid of the Casket, leaving its blue contents to slowly spill out of it into Asgard’s ground. Loki retreats hastily, riding on the fastest horse the royal family owns. Loki, Thor, Frigga, and Heimdall all land on Jotunnheim safely just as the blue mist envelopes the edge of the city.

The people of Asgard shriek in fright as their skin turns blue and their eyes turn red. The food in their mouths turn to ash and for seven days they know what it is to hunger.

Chapter End Notes

Well I hope that was a good ending for everyone. I felt Asgard got off a little scott free so I decided to do something about it.

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